The International Review of Ancient Art & Archaeology

MINERVA

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

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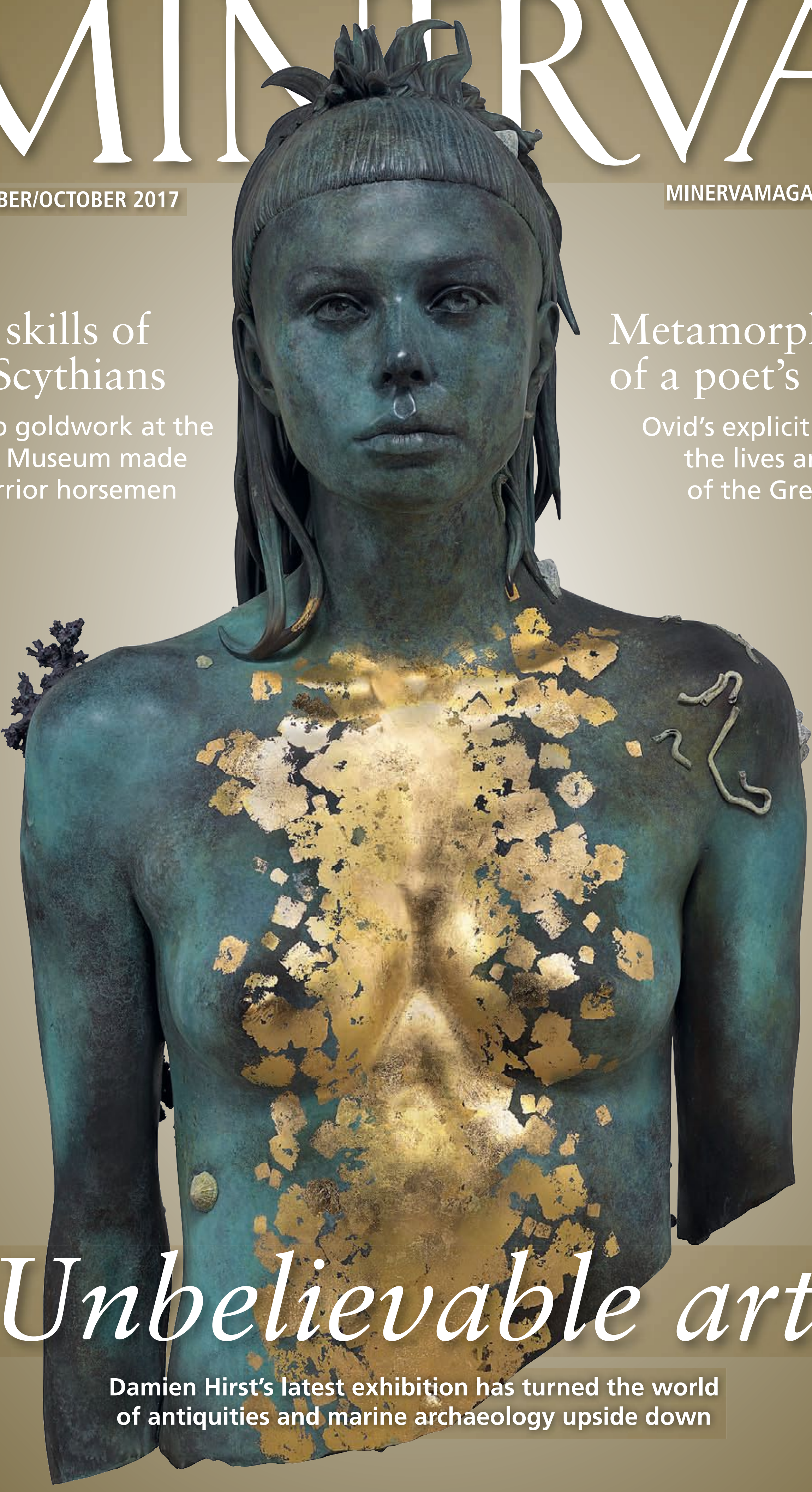

The skills of the Scythians

Superb goldwork at the British Museum made by warrior horsemen

Metamorphoses of a poet's mind

Ovid's explicit tales of the lives and loves of the Greek gods

Volume 28 Number 5

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Unbelievable art

Damien Hirst's latest exhibition has turned the world of antiquities and marine archaeology upside down

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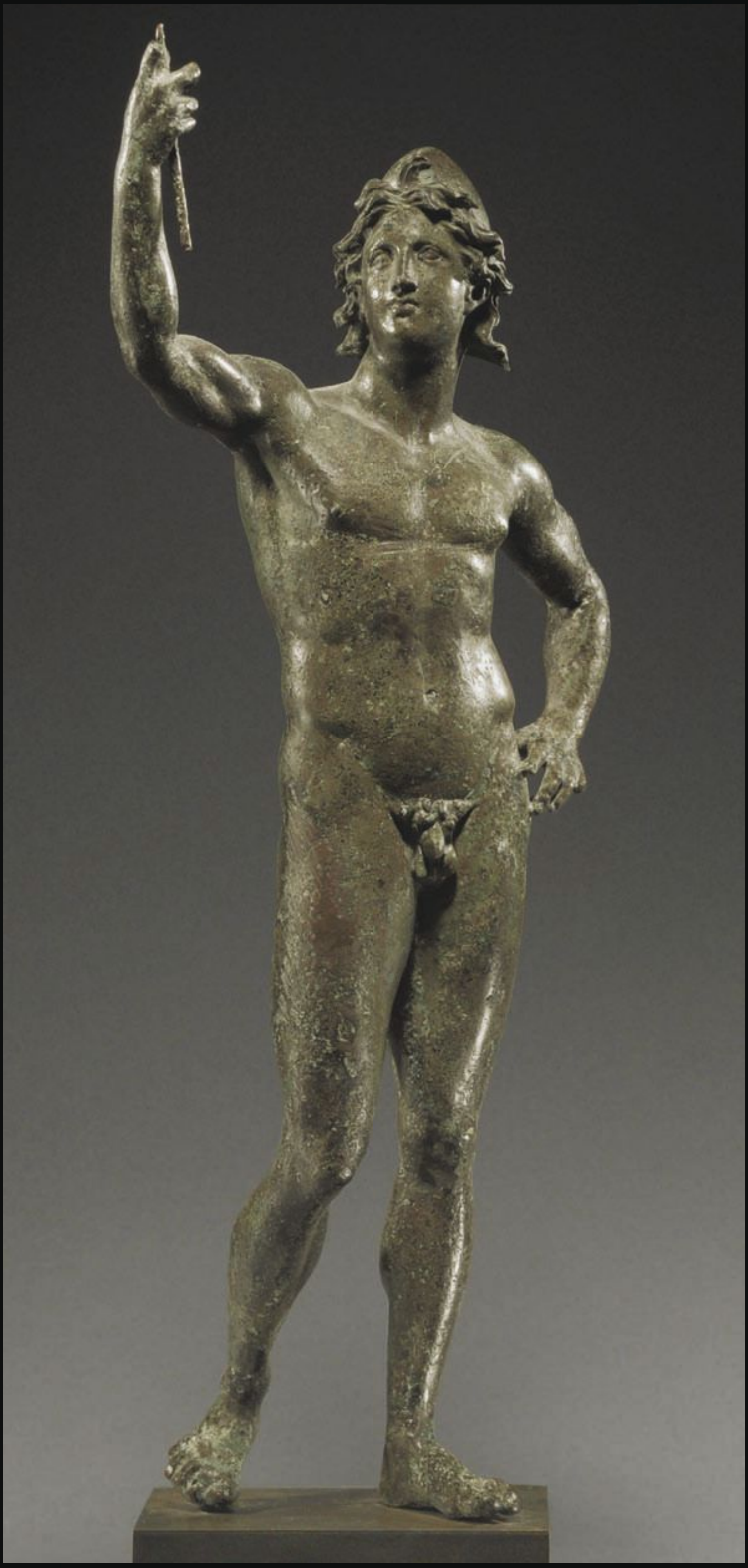
LARGE ROMAN BRONZE STATUE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT AS A DIOSCUROS, holding a lance, pilos helmet on his head. He stands in contrapposto with his weight on his left leg, his left hand on his hip, and his right knee slightly bent. With his raised right arm he holds the lance, a portion of which still remains. A superb work of art in exceptional condition. A powerful and evocative example based upon the masterpiece by Lysippos.

Ca. 2nd Century AD
Height: 16 in. (40.5 cm.)

Ex Belgian collection; Brussels art market, July 2005; Dr. H. collection, Germany, acquired from Royal-Athena in January 2006. Published: J. Eisenberg, Art of the Ancient World, *vol. XVII, 2006, no. 43.*

After his death Alexander was often associated with the Dioskuroi, mortals who became divine, and were regarded as the saviors and benefactors of the people.
From ancient literature we know of a painting by Apelles representing Alexander between the Dioskuroi. This and another painting by Apelles were brought to Rome by Augustus who set them in facing walls of the Aula del Colosso, a square room at the end of the long northwestern lateral portico of the Forum Augustum, next to the Temple of Mars. This would associate Augustus with Alexander and also infer his divinity and underscore his benevolence as Pater Patriae.



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Damien Hirst: *Aspect of Katie Ishtar ¥o-Landi,* patinated bronze.169.5cm x 87.7cm x 66.5cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017. Turn to *Unbelievable treasures* on page 20.

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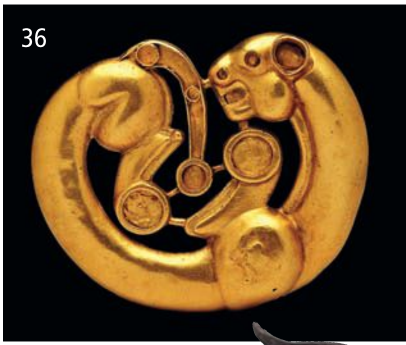

A sea-change in art?

Artefacts brought up from under the sea have been subject to subtle changes in texture, form and colour – they have undergone metamorphoses

You may be surprised to find a sculpture by Damien Hirst on the cover, but when you read the feature, on pages 20 to 26, by Sean A Kingsley (a past Editor of *Minerva*) all will become clear. *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable*, Hirst's exhibition, on show in two of the most prestigious galleries in Venice is, no doubt, a bold exercise in blurring the boundaries between art, archaeology and antiquities, between fact and fiction – and it is one that has turned the concept of marine archaeology on its head. This is why Sean, who has worked as a marine archaeologist for many years, is the perfect person to write the piece. For example, he is able to parallel Hirst's story about the location of the wreck of the fictional ship, *Apistos* (*Unbelievable*), with areas of the ocean in which real Roman galleys laden with treasure might have sunk. The treasure was destined for rich Romans who craved luxury goods to furnish and adorn their 'des res' villas along the shores of the Mediterranean. Naturally, some of these boats, laden with precious cargoes, were wrecked and sank to the ocean floor.

The Roman lust for rare, exotic and expensive goods is explored in an exhibition called *Luxury in Antiquity*, on show in a museum in Arles in the South of France. On pages 28 to 33 you can see some of the silverware, gold, antique sculpture and jewellery exhibited there.

Damien Hirst's work also clearly shows the metamorphic power of the sea over any artefact that it swallows, and this leads us on to another Roman passion, the poetry of Ovid including *Metamorphoses* and *Amores*. This year is the 2000th anniversary of his birth, and Classicist John Davie has written about the poet and his work on pages 8 to 13. He describes Ovid's poems as '*indiscreet, sexy and witty*', which is probably one of the reasons why they still appeal to a modern audience. For example, a film entitled *Metamorposes* has just been released. It is, says the publicity blurb: '*a retelling of Ovid's Roman poem of the same name.* Metamorphoses *chronicles the journey of Europa, using select stories from the original work. When Europa skips class and meets a magnetic young man named Jupiter, she embarks on an unexpected and magical journey... As the confrontation between seductive, yet vengeful gods and innocent mortals unfolds, Europa grasps a greater sense of life and love*'.

One of the tales included in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is the story of Orpheus whose music was so powerful that it tamed wild beasts and charmed all of those who heard it. This myth is one of the most pervasive in the history of music, as well as in art and literature. The French polymath Jean Cocteau, for example, was obsessed by Orpheus – as were many other painters, poets, writers and musicians. Anyone who has heard *Orfeo*, one of the three surviving 'operas' by Claudio Monteverdi, will have been bewitched by its beguiling beauty. His other two operas were *The Return of Ulysses*, based on the story from Homer's *Odyssey*, and *The Coronation of Poppaea*, which relates the history of Nero and his mistress, later his wife, Poppaea. The duet by the Roman emperor and his new empress in the final scene is one of the most beautiful songs you will ever hear, sung by two of the wickedest characters in the history of opera. How brilliant of Monterverdi to have presented us with this paradox: beauty is not always good and evil is not always ugly. Now, 450 years after Monteverdi's birth, we pay tribute to his music on pages 42 to 45.

On a more down-to-earth note, we look at what the written records of the Romans (the Vindolanda Tablets, found just south of Hadrian's Wall, and the Bloomberg Tablets, recently unearthed in the City of London) can tell us. Both reveal facts about the everyday lives of Romans in Britain – soldiers in the North and citizens of Londinium. To find out more see pages 46 to 51.

Last but not least, we approach the British Museum's big autumn exhibition. It focuses on a little-known people – the Scythians – warriors on horseback who galloped across the Siberian steppes. It is sponsored by BP, rather appropriate since the company has interests in that region. On pages 34 to 41, the exhibition's curator, St John Simpson, shines a light on these energetic nomads who wore conical hats, belted trousers and long-sleeved gowns. But it is their beautiful, skilled goldwork that will catch your eye when you visit the exhibition that is opening in mid-September.

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St John Simpson

is an archaeologist and a senior curator in the Department of the Middle East in the British Museum. His last BM exhibition was *Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World*; he is currently curating *Scythians: Warriors of Ancient Siberia*. He has excavated and travelled extensively in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Tom Ford

has a PhD in history from the University of Adelaide. He has written extensively on Classical music, especially Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. He has been a writer and broadcaster for *Limelight* magazine, 5MBS Adelaide and 3MBS Fine Music in Melbourne and is currently the PR and Media Manager (Classics & Jazz) for Universal Music Australia.

inthenews

Recent stories from the world of art, archaeology and museums

UNESCO list goes back to prehistory

1. Kujataa in Greenland shows Norse and Inuit farming at the edge of the Ice Cap, little changed from the time when the two cultures merged.

© GREENLAND NATIONAL MUSEUM / PHOTO GEORG NYEGAARD

There was a prehistoric flavour to the 25 additions to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites confirmed in Warsaw recently. Among those now included in the list, the most ancient was the 'Caves and Ice Age Art in Swabian Jura'.

Half dozen caves in Baden-Württemberg, discovered in the 1860s, date from 43,000 to 33,000 years ago, just as the Ice Age was receding. Here, some of the oldest figurative art in the world was carved, depicting humans, lions, horses, mammoths, cattle, as well as musical instruments, weapons, tools and jewellery made from stone, antlers, ivory and bone.

More than 50 figures have survived. They are believed to include the world's oldest sculptural depictions of humans, notably Venus of Hohle Fels, a six-centimetre high female figure in mammoth ivory, which was discovered in 2008.

An archaeological theme park around the Vogelherd cave provides information and has a small lion and mammoth on display, but all the other finds have been dispersed. The Venus of Hohle Fels can now be seen in the Blaubeuren Museum of Prehistory, which also has an ivory flute, while a beautiful ivory wild horse, five centimetres high, is in the collection of Tübingen University's Museum of Ancient Cultures in Hohentübingen Castle. The largest figure found is an upright half-lion, half-man, 35-40,000 years old, 31cm tall; this is now in the Ulm Museum.

Perhaps just as ancient is the cave art in the Xam Khomani Heartlands of Angola, another on the new UNESCO list. The Xam were a clan of the San, or Bushmen, who inhabited southwestern Africa for thousands of years before being displaced, leaving the Khomani as the last surviving indigenous San community in South Africa.

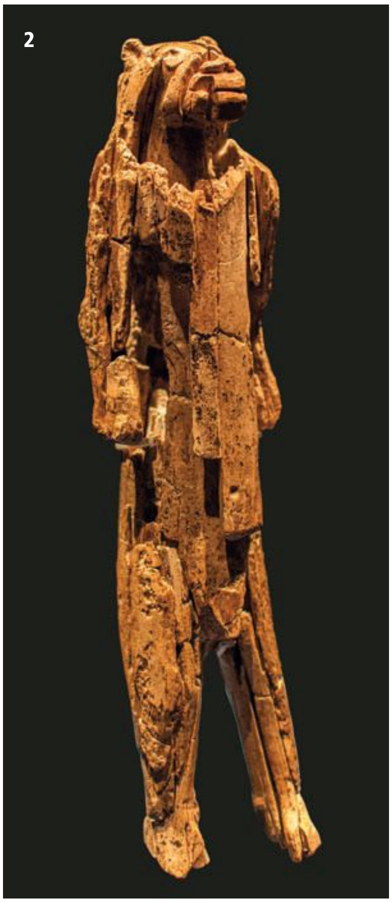
Their living landscape has now been recognised as an important aspect of national culture. Although the Xam have died out, UNESCO sees their rock art as providing *'a unique memorial to lost pre-colonial cultures in Africa*'. Examples of their art can be found over some extremely large areas but, the UNESCO report says: '*the two components are in relative close proximity and are considered as a single nomination illustrating the heritage of a unique group of African cultures, most of which have disappeared without record of the knowledge and practices they embodied*.'

One cultural landscape from more recent times that attracted UNESCO's attention are the sub-arctic farmlands of Kujataa in Greenland. This is where Norse adventurers expanded beyond Europe to settle abroad.

In an area of some 100km around Tunulliarfikfjord are traces of Eskimo/Greenlandic culture as well as large clusters of ruined winter houses used from the Middle Ages until the beginning of the 20th century.

The report on the site concludes: '*It is possible to follow the evolution and changes of the Thule Eskimo tradition over this time span up to the time when the culture can be termed Greenlandic. In this ultimate phase, they meet the Norwegians and Danes, and begin the coexistence with these, which gradually leads to them abandoning their old settlements and building traditions*.' (For further information see: http://whc.unesco.org)

Roger Williams



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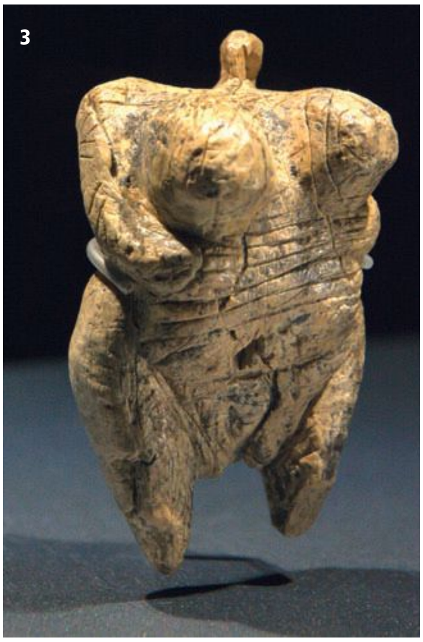


2. and 3. The Lion-man and the Venus of Hohle Fels, both made of mammoth ivory, are the oldest known sculptures.

1. An aerial view of the archaeological site set in the an wooded area of great natural beauty.

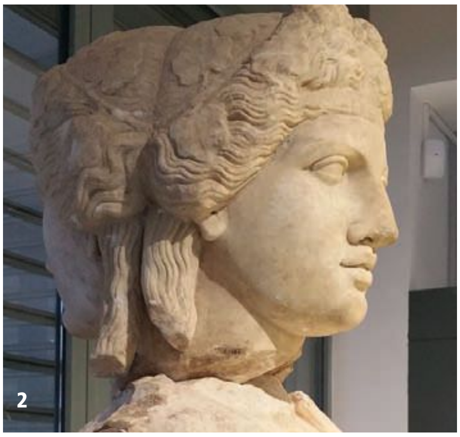
PHOTOGRPAHS COURTESY OF PROFESSOR NICHOLAS STAMPOLITIDIS

In the Eleutherian Grove

Eleutherna sits deep in the foothills of Mount Ida, midway between Rethymnon and Crete's capital, Heraklion. A thriving centre, particularly during the Iron Age, its past has gradually been brought to light since 1985 when excavations, undertaken by the University of Crete, began. Lying close to the sea, between ancient Kydonia (modern-day Chania) to the west, Knossos to the east, and Phaistos and Gortyn to the south, Eleutherna was well placed to prosper. Its roots date back to 3000 BC and this site was continuously inhabited until the 14th century AD, but excavations at the nearby Orthi Petra necropolis indicate that it flourished particularly between *circa* 900 BC and the end of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century BC.

Now its history is illuminated in the Museum of Ancient Eleutherna, which opened last year, and in the Eleutherian Grove, a sizable archaeological park that incorporates the ancient city and its necropolis. Inside, the elegant, low-slung museum is well lit and airy. Wide windows provide views of the wild beauty of the surrounding hills. Eleutherna's history is told here through a host of well-presented objects and several vivid audiovisual reconstructions of centuries of life here, all set out in three galleries.

The first two galleries present a wealth of finds that trace the political, social and religious life of Eleutherna throughout its long existence. Some are uniquely precious, like the *heroon* (hero)-sanctuary – believed to be one of the world's earliest monuments to an unknown soldier.



2. A large white marble head of a goddess inside the Museum of Ancient Eleutherna.

The third room showcases finds from the cemeteries of Eleutherna and from the nearby Orthi Petra necropolis. This site has yielded up dramatic evidence of the kind of funeral rites described in the *Iliad*, and other burial practices over the centuries.

The grave of one young warrior, dating from 720–700 BC, included the body of a man thought to have been a prisoner-of-war, slaughtered before the funeral pyre, in much the same way as Homer describes the execution of Trojan captives at the funeral of Patroclus. Intriguing, too, are the remains of four women, aged between 13 to 72, from the Early Archaic period, found in one building in the necropolis.

Great care has been taken to protect the natural beauty of the whole site, explains Nicholas Stampolidis, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Crete, who has worked here since excavations began more than 30 years ago. '*The finds tell us everything about Eleutherna's life from the third millennium BC to the Byzantine period; from everyday life, food and accommodation, to architecture, sculpture, war, love and death*,' he says.

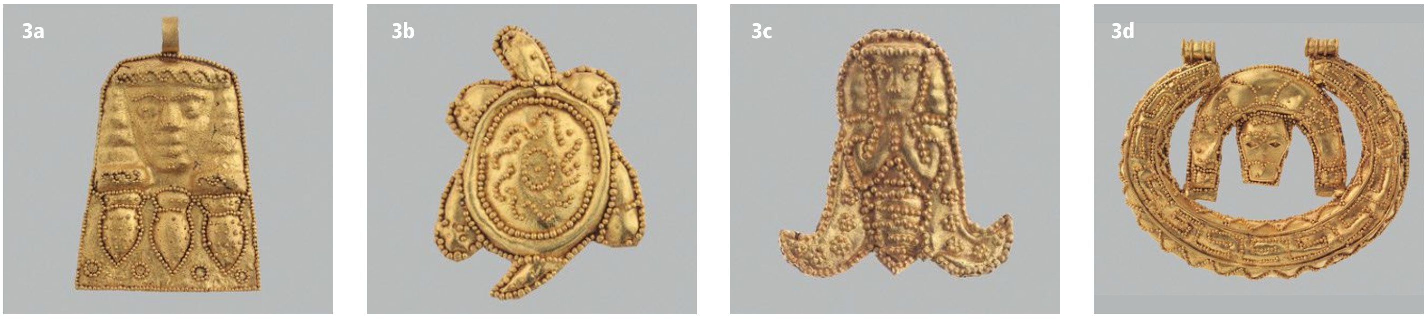
'*The site is a palimpsest of different periods of the life of the area, as well as Eleutherna's connections to other cities on the island and with the Aegean, Asia Minor, Dodecanese, Cyprus, Phoenicia, Syria, Egypt and Italy. For me, the important thing about Eleutherna is not just the objects and the remains of the site – "the antiquities" – but interpreting the people and societies behind them.*'

Around the museum, the Eleutherian Grove stretches over a number of wooded hills and valleys, connected by footpaths. The remains of the ancient settlement lie scattered on a hillside, the acropolis sits on a plateau shaded by olive trees and an imposing stone tower, dating back to Hellenistic times, looms up from a ridge near the village of Eleutherna. Vast cisterns are cut into a rock face. Further down, a stream winds through the valley, straddled by an ancient bridge, while inside the necropolis, a vast area protected by a modern arched roof, human remains are still in situ.

For visitors today, the museum, the grove and the necropolis evoke a palpable sense of Eleutherna's long and eventful life – and death.

(For more details visit http://mae.com.gr)

Diana Bentley



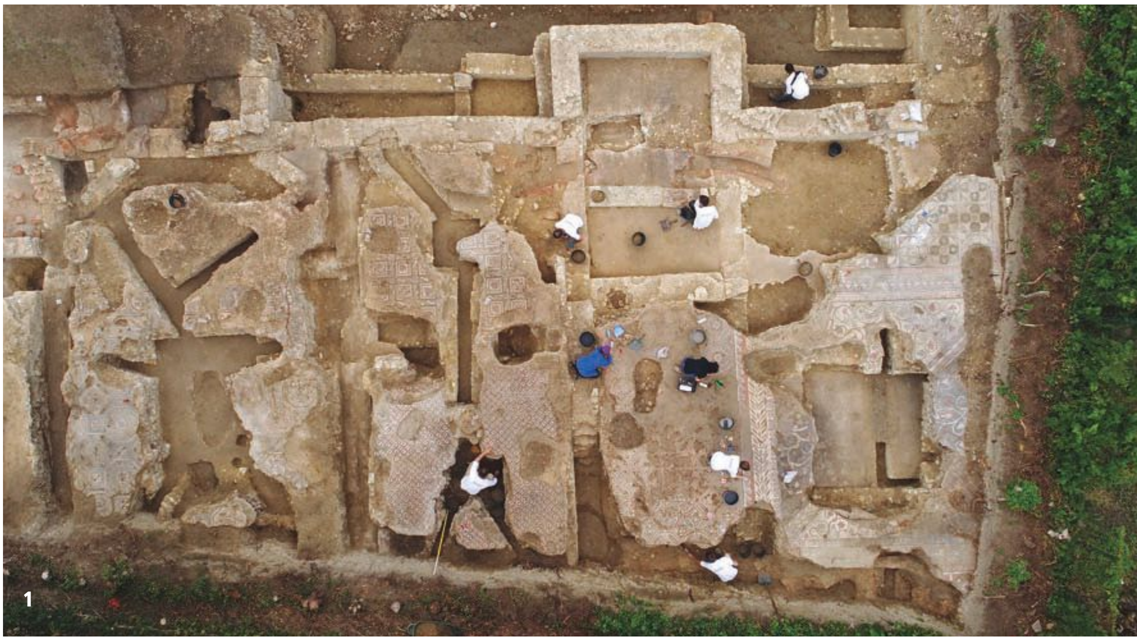
3a-3d. Four exquisitely beaded gold objects found in the Orthi Petri necropolis at Eleutherna: a deity; a turtle; a bee goddess and a pendant.

Gallo-Roman ‘des res’ found in Auch

A vast aristocratic Gallo-Roman residence is being excavated in Auch, the historical capital of the Gers department (formerly known as Gascony) in south-west France. The discovery is particularly important in so far as little had been uncovered from Auch’s Gallo-Roman past until now.

The site lies some 100 metres from the forum of Elimberris (the pre-Roman name of the city) which was on the right bank of the River Gers, below the modern urban centre. It was first mentioned by the Romans when they conquered the area, then inhabited by an Aquitanian tribe, *circa* 50 BC.

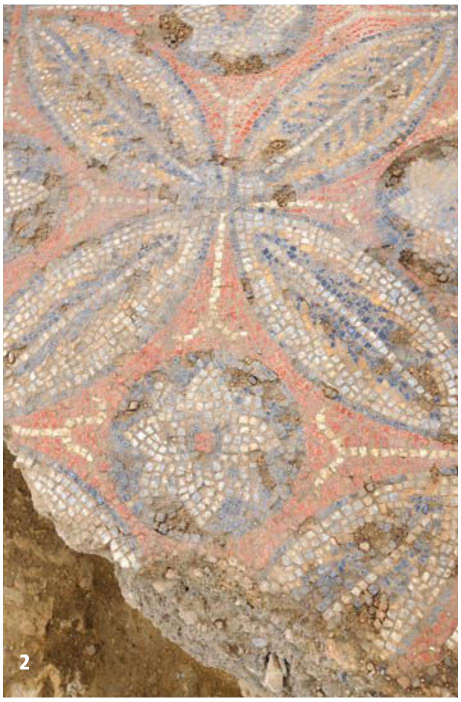
Excavation work carried out many years ago and some 10 further diagnoses had detected human settlements dating back to the second half of the 1st century BC, but the first signs of real urbanisation appear only at the beginning of the 1st century AD. That period marks the beginning of urban expansion, structured by a road network oriented on the cardinal points. Archaeological surveys indicate the presence of a forum and quality private residences. The city seemed to thrive during the Late Roman Empire, when luxury residences including *thermae* and mosaic floors were built. One of them is at present being cleared. The *thermae* were added to the vast *domus* around AD 320–30.



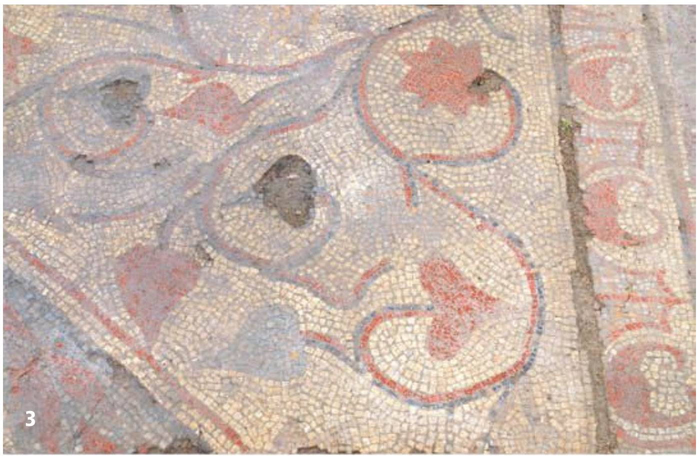
1. An aerial view of the team of INRAP archaeologists at work on the site of the *domus* at Auch.

At least three rooms in a 28-metre-long and 10-metre-wide wing had an under-floor central heating system known as a radiating hypocaust.

Each floor was decorated with polychrome mosaics, two with geometrical patterns, composed of a combination of octagons and squares in one, and rosettes in the other. The third, the largest, forms a carpet of complex geometrical and flower and leaf motifs. Fragments of black, bluish, green and red molten glass tesserae found in the rubble embedded in the ground indicate that some of the walls were also decorated with mosaics.



JEAN-LOUIS BELLURGER INRAP



JEAN-LOUIS BELLURGER INRAP

2. and 3. Details of the colourful flower and leaf motifs from the ‘Aquitanian style’ mosaic floors found at the site at Auch.

These mosaics are related to what is called the ‘Aquitanian style’, which was developed towards the end of Empire in south-western Gaul. Such floors were often found in rural villages, but are much rarer in urban buildings – before this they had only been unearthed in Bordeaux and Eauze.

The *domus* went through two major architectural alterations during its history, as shown by the presence of an older mosaic found under one in the 4th-century remains.

This aristocratic residence was abandoned at the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century when it was systematically taken apart. The building material was salvaged: walls were dismantled stone by stone, the marble paving was ripped up and tiles from the heating system were taken away, which damaged part of the mosaic floors.

The archaeologists are now mounting the remaining mosaics on canvas so that they can be removed and sent for conservation and restoration. When this is completed, they will be displayed to the public. In the meantime, the excavation is ongoing on the site, focusing on remaining features from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. (This work is being done by the French National Institute of Preventive Archaeology or INRAP; see www.inrap.fr/).

Nicole Benazeth

A skeleton crew on the *Mary Rose*

© THE MARY ROSE TRUST

2. The Archer Royal, who has a reconstructed face, is one of 92 nearly complete skeletons found on the *Mary Rose*. 3. The skeleton of the ship's dog, who is nicknamed Hatch.

This year the Mary Rose Trust celebrates the 35th anniversary of the recovery of the Tudor warship that made headline news when almost half of her hull was dramatically pulled out of the sea off Portsmouth on 11 October, 1982.

Drying tubes have now been removed from the 32-metre-long cutaway section of the ship that rises unobstructed through three storeys of the purpose-built museum (**1**) beside HMS *Victory* in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Innovative video projections in relevant parts of the hull bring to life on board activities and, in the latest phase of research, the ship's crew members are being imaginatively reassembled from their scattered remains.

The pride of Henry VIII's navy, the *Mary Rose* sank during a confrontation with a French invasion fleet a mile from shore in the Solent. It is thought she probably heeled over when water poured in through her gun-ports as she turned, so her starboard side sank in the protecting mud, while her port side rotted away. But, although her location was known, it was not until the invention of Scuba (the word come from self-contained underwater breathing aparatus) diving that the wreck could be fully explored by archaeologists.

By 1979 the Mary Rose Trust was formed to undertake what remains the world's largest underwater excavation.

Among scores of volunteer divers attracted to the site was Alex Hildred, an archaeology graduate from Sheffield University. She had learned to dive during her studies but, until then, her experience had been confined to land-based sites.

Now, the Trust's Head of Research, Ordnance and Human Remains, Dr Hildred has lost none of her enthusiasm for the project. What really fascinates her is the historical range of the ship. '*When she was launched in 1511*,' she explains, '*she was the last of the medieval period, and when she sank 34 years later, she had entered the modern era with cannon and lidded gun-ports cut in her sides*.'

Medieval weaponry rcovered from the *Mary Rose* included: longbows (172 were recovered, with 2303 complete arrows, 7834 including fragments), gunpowder, 78 cannon and handguns. '*We didn't know that cast bronze muzzle-loading cannons and wrought-iron breech-loading guns were used at the same time*,' says Dr Hildred, who oversaw the authentic reconstruction of cannon at the John Taylor Bell Foundry in Loughborough, which was then trialled at the MOD range in Shoeburyness.

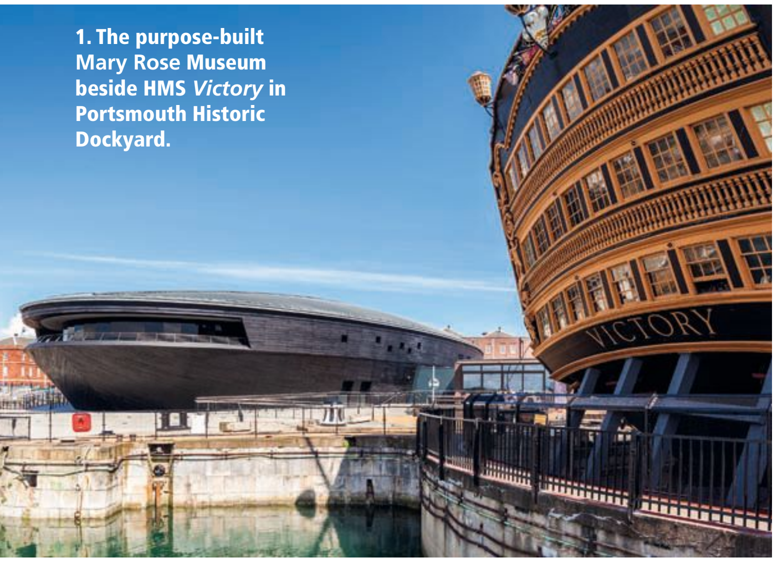
Many artefacts from that era did not survive on land, and there is an extraordinary diversity of material on display, from giant cooking cauldrons to personal possessions, such as a muiscal instrument called a *douçaine*, similiar in sound to an oboe, and the only one found anywhere in the world. With advancing conservation, knowledge is shared abroad, particularly with the Swedish ship *Vasa*, built more than a century after *Mary Rose* and salvaged in 1961. '*Marine archaeologists are a small community*,' Dr Hildred says, '*we all know each other.*'

Facial reconstructions of eight of the crew, including the cook, the Archer Royal (**2**) and the Master Gunner, help to breathe life into the museum show cases. Of around 500 crew, only 35 survived. With advances in DNA-testing and isotope analysis, the challenge is to find out more about what they were like and where they were from. '*We have 92 partially reconstructed skeletons*,' says Dr Hildred, '*yet we have 179 skulls*.'

Dr Garry Scarlett, a DNA expert from Portsmouth University, is working with Dr Hildred and the Trust to try to establish to whom the bones belong. One success he has already had is with the ship's dog, dubbed Hatch, whose skeleton (**3**) is now on display. Analysis shows that he may have been a cross-between a terrier and whippet and was, no doubt, an efficient rat-catcher on board the *Mary Rose*.

(To find out more visit www.maryrose.org)

Roger Williams



1. The purpose-built Mary Rose Museum beside HMS *Victory* in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DOCKYARD © GARETH GARDNER

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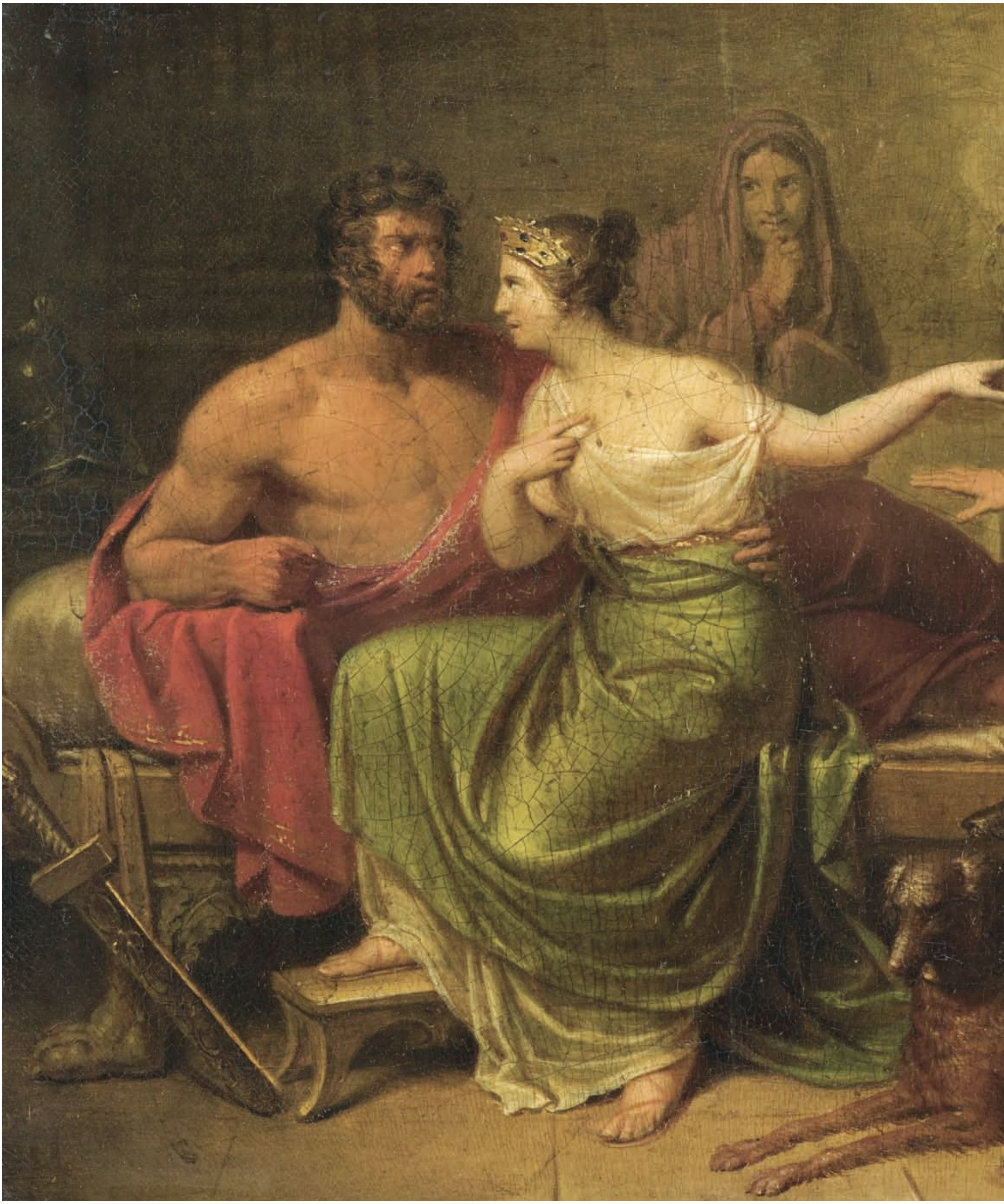
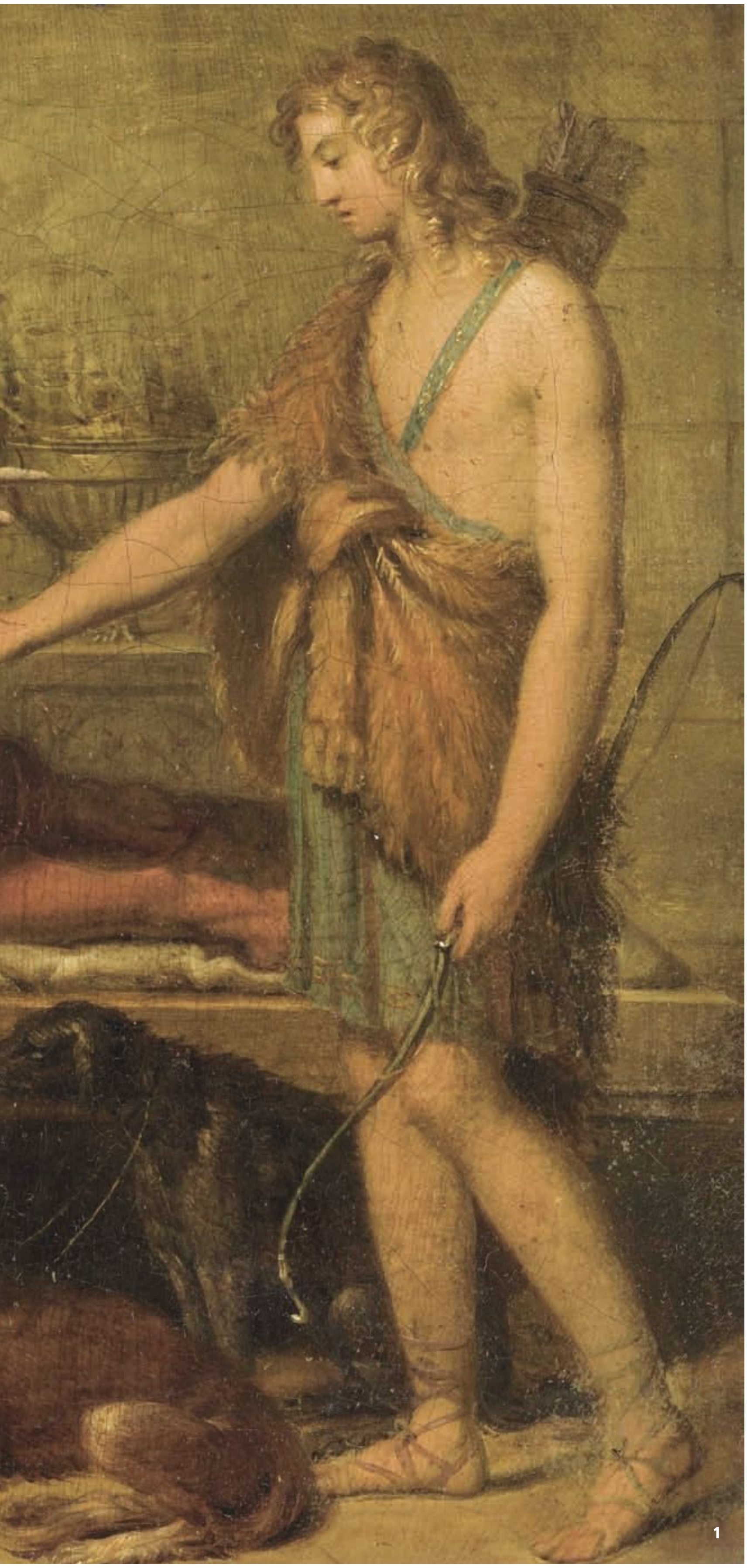
Metamorphoses of



the poet's mind

John Davie pays homage to the great Roman poet Ovid who died in exile 2000 years ago this year



1. *Hippolytus, Phaedra and Theseus,* German School, 18th century, oil on canvas. 24.43cm x 31.12cm. Wikimedia Images. In his telling of the story of Hippolytus and Phaedra (who is married to Theseus) Ovid asks implicitly: '*What would it be like to discover that your stepmother was passionately in love with you? What would you say and do?*' In this painting Phaedra is shown confessing her love for her stepson, Hippolytus, to her husband – the expression on the servant's face is extremely telling.

Poetry was Ovid's life, and it is time to consider his masterpiece that ensured his poetic life after death...

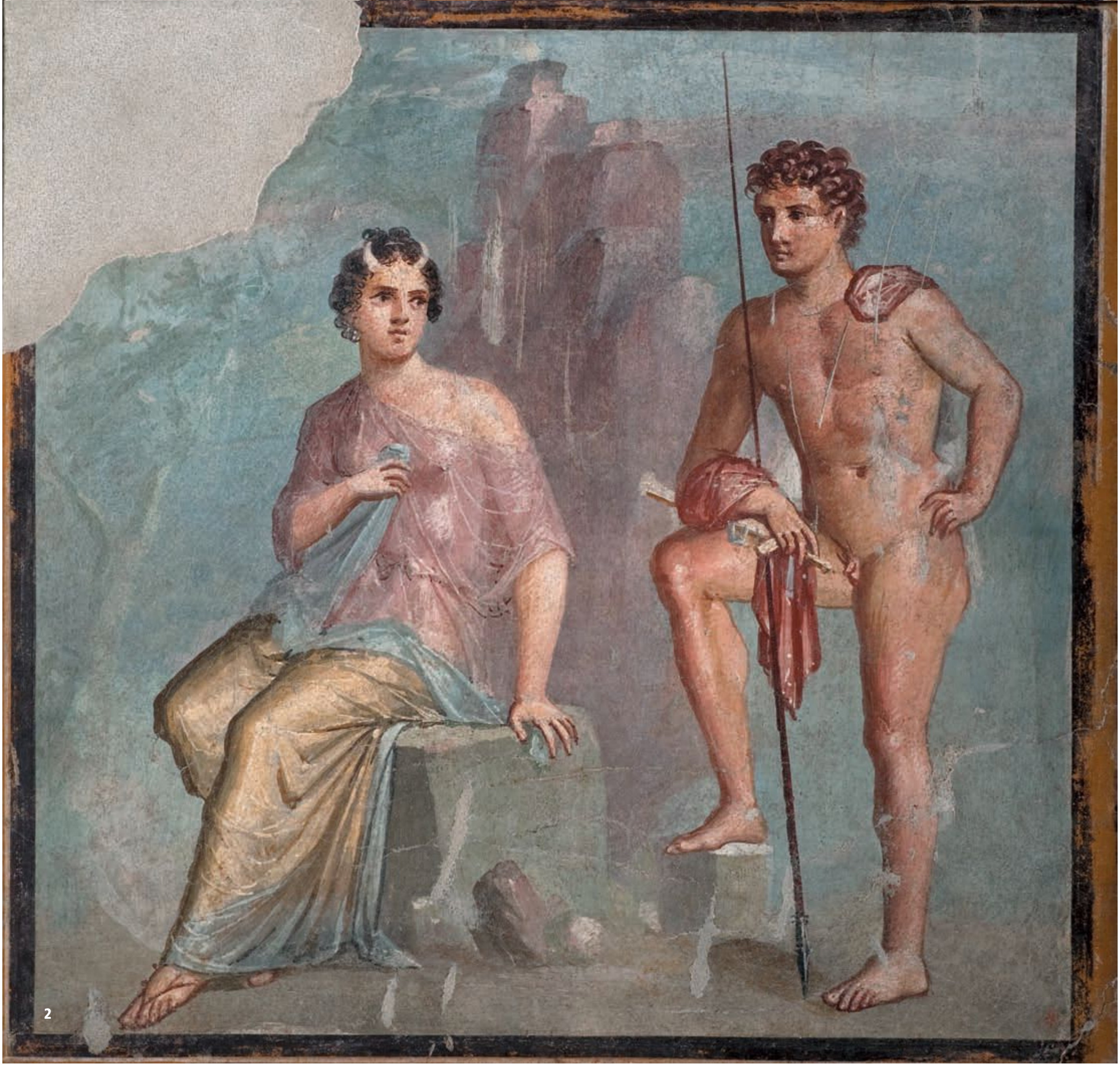
It was 2000 years ago that a famous Roman poet died at the age of 60 in exile at a town on the Black Sea called Tomis, now Constanta in Romania. By this time Publius Ovidius Naso, better known as Ovid, had become the leading poet of Rome, admired for the wit and sensuality of his verse. The question why he annoyed the emperor Augustus and found himself in this backwater, subject to attacks from the savage surrounding tribes and a miserable climate, isolated spiritually and culturally, is answered enigmatically by the poet himself: '*a poem and a mistake*'.

The poem was his first published work, *Amores,* a selection of elegiac love-poetry that stunned and captivated the Roman public by its subversive treatment of the genre, poking fun at serious treatments by earlier love poets. Further poems followed, all treating the subject of love with irony and wit, laced with self-mockery.

One example is his poem about a day at the chariot races with a woman he wants to sleep with, full of amusing advice to young men in a similar situation and frame of mind; or his poem to his mistress, who has been asked together with her husband to the same dinner-party as Ovid, suggesting ways in which they can still have fun as lovers without giving the game away.

For the emperor, concerned about Roman morals deteriorating, and constantly promoting the sanctity of marriage, Ovid was a menace and ripe for a fall. The '*mistake*' is generally taken to refer to some sexual scandal in which Ovid was implicated, possibly involving Augustus' daughter, Julia, unhappily married to the emperor's stepson and determined to have fun outside her marriage, which would explain the cruelty of Ovid's place of banishment, tantamount to sending someone like Oscar Wilde to spend the rest of his life on the Outer Hebrides.

The young man whose father

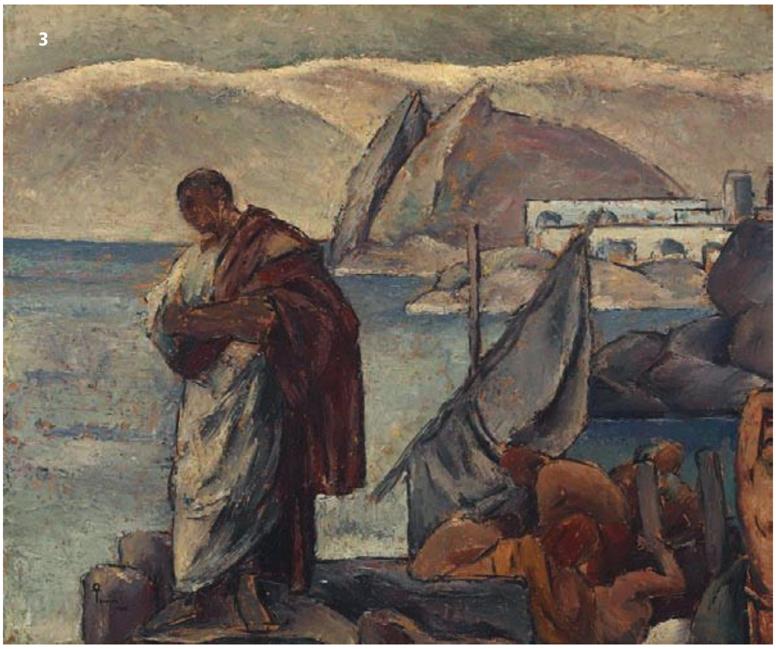


had wanted him to abandon his obsession with poetry and 'get a proper job' fitting his equestrian rank, tells us how this was contrary to his nature and calling as a poet: '*I obeyed and threw over the Muses' seat to try and write prose. Each time, willy-nilly, out came a poem, metrically correct, and all my attempts at prose were verse*.'

Poetry was Ovid's life, and it is time to consider his masterpiece that ensured his poetic life after death, the *Metamorphoses*. This vast poem, begun in AD 2, was an epic in 15 books and nothing if not ambitious. Taking as its theme transformation, it deals with nothing less than universal history from Creation's emergence from Chaos to the poet's own times. But the real reason why this poem has stood the test of time and exerted the greatest influence of any work of ancient literature is its treatment of human psychology. If literature

2. Wall painting of Io, one object of the god Zeus' desire, and her minder Argus, from the House of Meleager in Pompeii. AD 62–79. 102cm x 107cm. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. Archivio Fotografico. It is currently on show in *Amori divini* (*The Loves of the Gods*) at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples (see pages 14 to 19).

3. *Ovid in Exile*, 1915, by the Romanian artist Ion Theodorescu-Sion (1882–1939), oil on canvas. It show the poet in Tomis where he died in exile. 36.5cm x 43.5cm. Wikimedia Images.



'Let others praise ancient times; I am glad I was born in these.' Ovid: *Ars Amatoria* (3.121-2) can be described as the laboratory of the human soul, Ovid is the master-scientist in that laboratory.

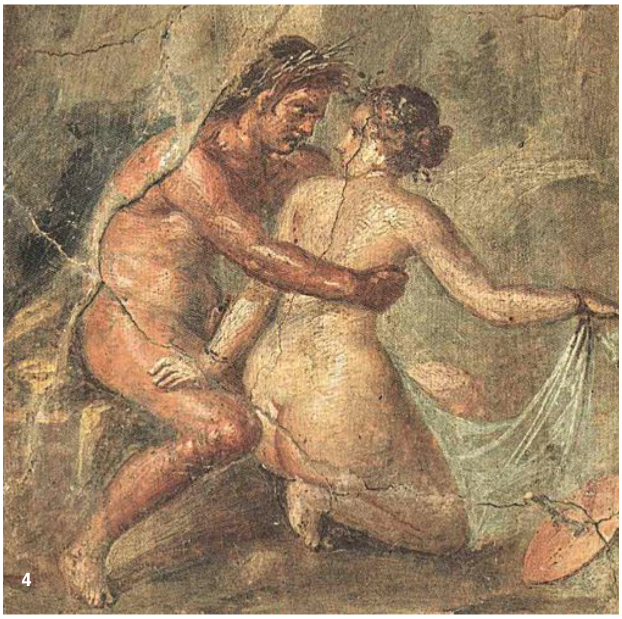
Love figures prominently in the poem, which has been well called an epic of love. In a real sense, Ovid had no option but to turn to a new genre of poetry, having not so much finished the genre of love poetry as finished it off; after Ovid no one could contemplate writing love poetry in its traditional form. His natural gift of writing verse that was indiscreet, sexy and witty became the ideal vehicle for presenting this treasure trove of Greek myth. He set out to take these fantasies of myth and to use them as a means of talking about human experience. He takes the characters and presents them in contemporary colours as real people.

In humanising these characters, through his ingenuity he brings them to life with a vividness that would strike a chord with his sophisticated audience. In even the most fantastic of ancient myths he will find the contemporary human angle.

So he asks implicitly in the story of Hippolytus and Phaedra: '*What would it be like to discover that your stepmother was passionately in love with you? What would you say and do?*' Dramas on this subject existed before (by Euripides) and after (by Racine) but it is Ovid who makes us feel that what we are listening to is a real person pouring out his troubles rather than splendid rhetoric.

We see the world of Greek myth today through the perspective of Ovid. His way of telling, or retelling these compelling stories, has become part of the European consciousness. This is particularly true of his treatment of the divine. A barrier towards understanding Greek and Roman religious belief is the Judaeo-Christian tradition we have inherited, whereby there is one God, and He is supremely good.

The Greeks and Romans thought there was a multiplicity of gods who were capable of 'good' acts but for whom 'goodness' was mainly an irrelevance. As early as 700 BC and the epic poems of Homer the gods are shown as all too human in their petty quarrelling and rivalries, excelling humankind in power but setting them a poor example in morality. Virgil's supreme god is, like the *Aeneid* itself, his account of the foundation of the Roman people, serious and grave, but his contemporary, Ovid, overturns this, as his epic is so different from Virgil's. He manipulates the gods for his own literary purposes, showing them to be lustful, vindictive, selfish, cruel and (occasionally) dignified and concerned to be just, in other words largely a reflection of ourselves.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4. *Satyr and Maenad*, fresco detail from Casa degli Epigrammi, Pompeii, 1st century AD. Ovid wrote: '*When the fight she puts up shows she doesn't want to win, you have an easy victory: she betrays herself.*'

5. Fresco depicting Ovid surrounded by four vignettes of scenes from his tales, 1499–1502, by Luca Signorelli (*circa* 1450–1523) in the Chapel of San Brizio in the Duomo, Orvieto. Wikimedia Images.

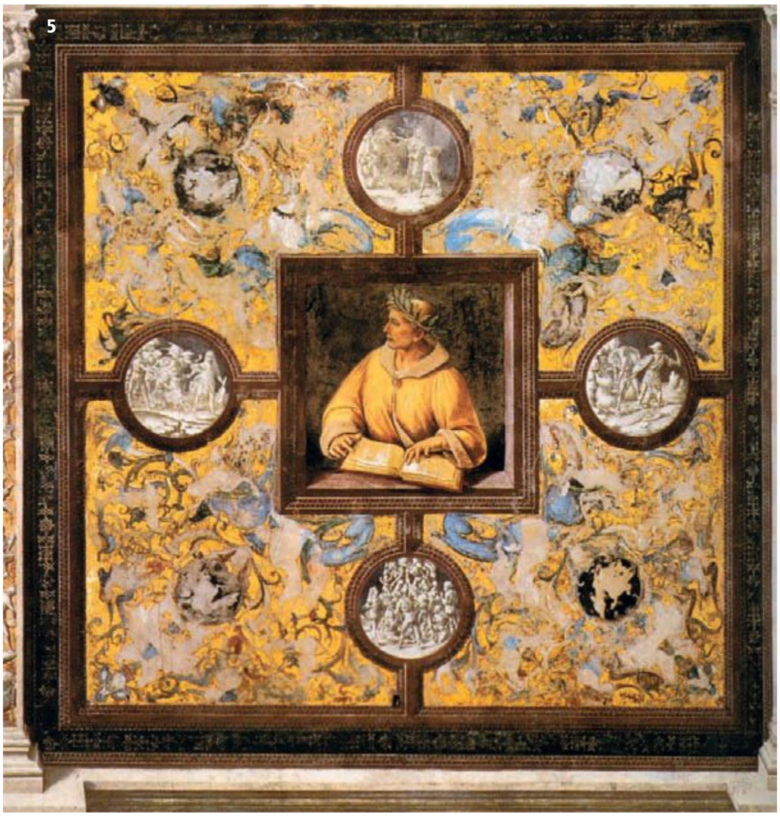
As an expert, Ovid presents us with the full gamut of erotic experience in the *Metamorphoses*. He can present love as familial and the foundation of happy marriage, for example in the story of Baucis and Philemon, the elderly couple who unwittingly entertain in their humble cottage the gods Jupiter and Mercury. When the truth is revealed, the married couple are granted their wish, to die together at the same time, to avoid the pain of bereavement, and they become two trees grown side by side from one twin trunk.

He can portray the aridity of self-love as in the story of Narcissus, whose name has given us a pathological condition. Love can be unwholesome and obsessive, as Ovid knew. He describes a beautiful girl, Scylla, infatuated by Minos, the handsome general of the enemy army besieging her father's city. She cuts off the talismanic lock of hair from her father's head and gives it to the general, so that he might take the city and with it her father's life. Ovid shows how sexual desire can cause betrayal of one's own family and end horribly for the betrayer: Scylla is transformed into a hideous sea-monster.

Rape, or attempted rape, features often in the poem, about 50 times in the 15 books. There is no doubt that, for Ovid, *amor* or love, however conjugal it may become, is underpinned by sexual desire. Even 2000 years on it is hard to deny the truth of his psychology here, as so often with ancient insights into human behaviour.

His use of irony and paradox in the poem is one of its main attractions. Time and again characters act or speak in a way they think will bring them happiness but the reverse is true. The story of Narcissus

If literature can be described as the laboratory of the human soul, Ovid is the master-scientist in the laboratory.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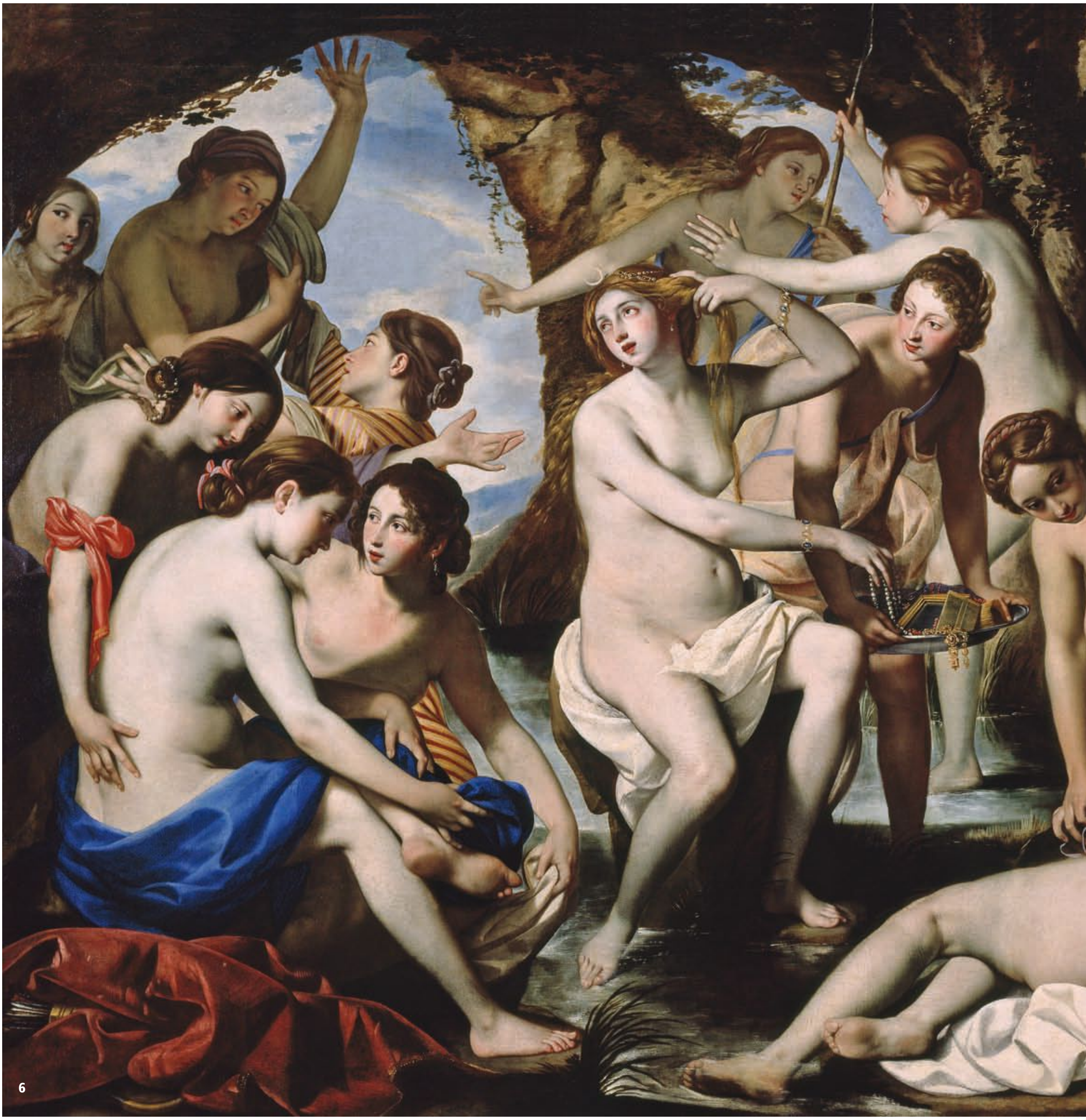


6. ***Diana Bathing*, 1644–45, by Francesco De Rosa detto Pacecco (1607–1656), oil on canvas. 200cm x 256cm. Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples. It is currently on show in *Amori divini* (*The Loves of the Gods*) at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples (see pages 14 to 19). The hapless hunter Actaeon can be seen with his dogs, about to enter the scene, in the top righthand corner.**

shows this especially well. Like most youths in the poem, he spends his days in hunting but he attracts the attention of a nymph, Echo, who is cursed by Juno with the ability only to repeat the final words of anything she hears another person say. She falls madly in love with Narcissus and Ovid ingeniously presents a situation where Narcissus' attempts to discourage Echo only encourage her the more, saying he will die before succumbing to any sexual advances, and when she dies of unrequited love he is punished by falling in love with his own image reflected in a pool, finally withering away like earlier victims of the love he had once inspired and rejected. By exquisite irony Narcissus is made to suffer at his own hands, transformed in the end into a daffodil, bowed over, as if gazing in endless admiration at his own reflection. He does indeed die before having sex.

Ovid was widely read in the original after his death. Shakespeare clearly knew his poetry well, having fallen under its spell at his Stratford grammar school, and loved its descriptive power and wit.

As far as the *Metamorphoses* is concerned, it is likely he had a good understanding of the poem in the original Latin but there was also available to him the famous 1564 translation by Arthur Golding, from which he took inspiration for many passages in his plays. Perhaps the best example is Prospero's great speech of renunciation at the end of *The Tempest*, beginning '*Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves…*'. Shakespeare has taken a passage from the story of Medea and Jason's father, Aeson, in Ovid's epic and turned it into a piece of writing as electrifying as anything in the whole of English poetry.

Whenever we enter an art gallery today, we are immediately confronted with two traditions: the Judaeo-Christian, which inspired artists to paint scenes from the

Ovid's natural gift of writing verse that was indiscreet, sexy and witty became the ideal vehicle for presenting this treasure trove of Greek myth.

Old and New Testaments, and the Classical, which drew on scenes from Greek and Roman history and myth. In this latter tradition Ovid's influence is paramount. His pictorial style and sense of drama were, of course, contributory but the main reason for his influence over artists was his subject-matter. The endlessly inventive world of Classical mythology in all its pagan sensuality has been a welcome counterbalance to the moral rectitude of biblical stories.

It would be difficult to list in full all the painters who were inspired by the *Metamorphoses*. Even the most serious of artists, such as Michelangelo, in painting his version of the Old Testament on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, was moved to include the Sibyls, the prophetic women of the ancient world, and to surround the central scenes of the Creation and Fall of Man with beautiful Greek youths reclining on clusters of grapes.

One can imagine the reception this had from the princes of the Catholic Church. As if this was not all, at the bottom of his Last Judgement, above the altar, we see the grim ferryman Charon, who in Greek mythology transported the dead souls across the River Styx to the Underworld, portrayed as a fiery-eyed demon beating the damned into his boat en route to the torments of Hell.

Michelangelo cannot (and has no wish to) escape the Classical tradition, even in this most sacred of rooms within the Vatican.

7

7. Statue of Ovid, 1887, bronze, by Ettore Ferrari (1845–1929) in Constanta, Romania (ancient Tomis, the city of the poet's exile). In 1925, a replica statue was made and erected in his birthplace, Sulmona in Abruzzo. Wikimedia Images.

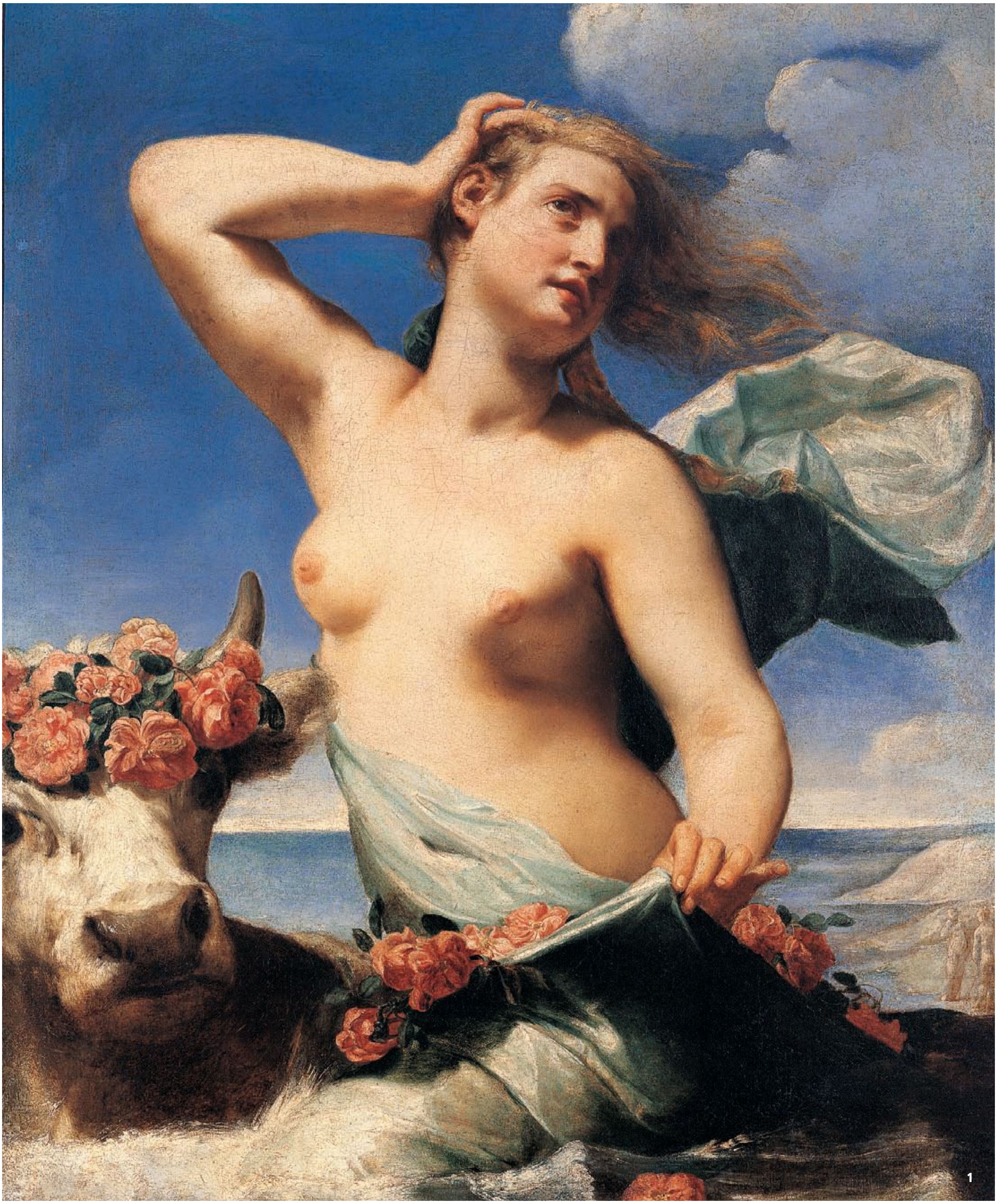
'Relevance' is a word much used today to justify things, not least what ought to be in the school curriculum. In its cruder manifestations this criterion can exclude much of aesthetic value. The question rarely put is 'relevance to what?' In some interpretations of the word all that matters are the present and, even more, the future, to which the only key is information technology. But was Cicero wrong to say that to be ignorant of history was to be forever a child? Are Mozart and Shakespeare without value because they are dead? Ovid's importance today is something that few people fixated on this kind of 'progress' will be capable of appreciating.

To return to the original image I used of literature functioning as the laboratory of the soul, I would argue that a writer like Ovid is useful in his ability to remind us of ourselves, of our limitations and potentials and, above all, of the need to tread carefully in an uncertain world. '*As long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee*', wrote Shakespeare in the final couplet of his most famous sonnet [Number 18, often known as *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day*?]. In these lines he assures his young patron, the Earl of Southampton, that, though they will one day perish, while sentient beings populate the earth this will not be the fate of his poem, so he will not be forgotten by posterity.

So it is with Ovid, who rings the changes in his great poem with change itself. Like Shakespeare, he knew his own worth as a poet, and felt there was in his work a permanent value. His gift of being able to tell a story with humour and pathos makes him a poet for all ages. As Ovid, himself, put it: '*Now stands it accomplished, this my task, a work proof against destruction by the wrath of Jupiter, by fire or sword, or by devouring time.*' ■

• *Metamorphoses*, a dramatised story-telling of Ovid's poem, will be performed by Hugh Lupton, with Daniel Morden, at Swan Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon at 7.30pm on Friday 27 October. A family version of the show will be performed at 1pm on Saturday 28 October. (www.rsc.org.uk)

For the love



# of the gods

An exhibition in Naples examines the timeless power of Greek myths, which are as vibrant today as when the Roman poet Ovid penned his *Metamorphoses* 2000 years ago – as **Dalu Jones** explains

Metamorphoses was the original title of an exhibition now called *Amori divini* (*The Loves of the Gods*) on show at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples but, although the title was changed, references to the Roman poet Ovid's famous Classical compilation of mythological stories of love and seduction are many. As well as reading Ovid, visitors to this exhibition might also like to look at *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (1988) by one of Italy's leading literary figures, Roberto Calasso (b 1941), as it will help them to make sense of the complex dynamics of action and reaction, cause and effect, that characterise the erotic activities of the gods, demi-gods and heroes of Greek mythology. For, like Ovid, Calasso is fascinated by the changes of shape and the shift of status that occur among gods and mortals when they are attracted to each other and mate. His premise is that myths are a living force today just as much as in the past.

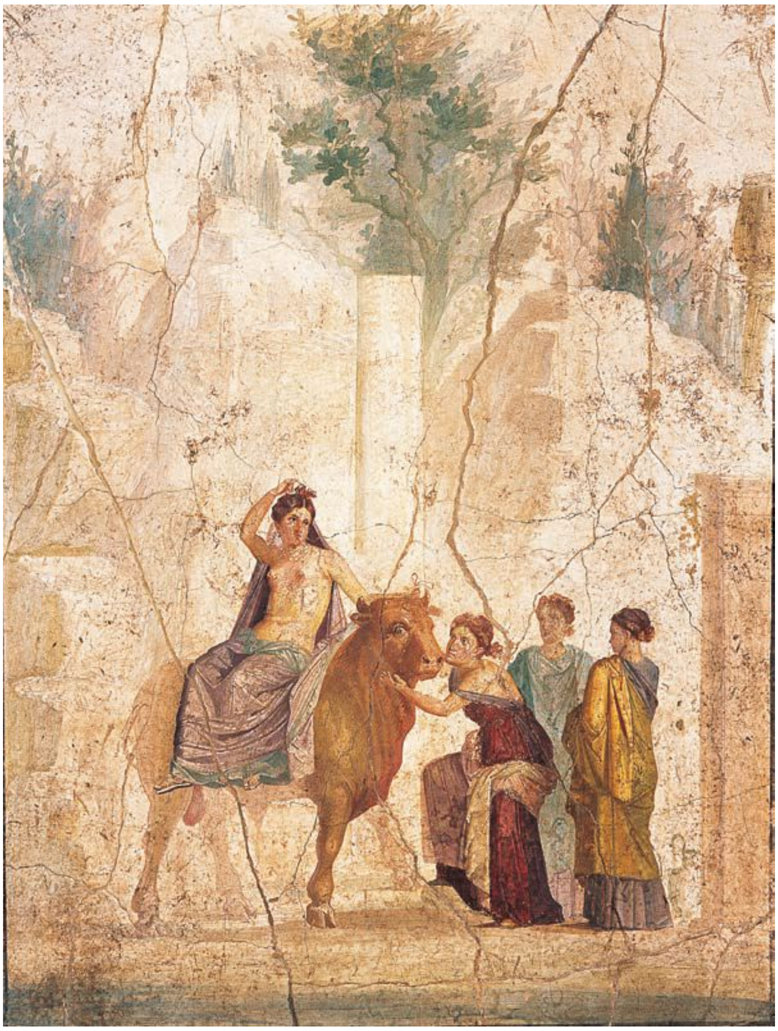
In his re-telling of the Greek myths, crude physical desire is the driving force behind their most significant actions. He makes it clear why the king of the gods, Zeus, was attracted to beautiful young girls like Danae, Europa and Leda, and boys, such as Ganymede, all of whom he seduced under various guises. Like their male counterparts, both the goddesses and women in the stories are equally possessed by passion, and they pursue the objects of their desire with reckless abandon. So seduction and, very often, abduction and rape are recurrent themes that trigger each mythical episode, which can be found in various local and chronological variants.

However, unlike Ovid, Calasso often provides several different versions of each myth, using many diverse existing sources and their continuous, complicated intermingling, so that we can understand the layered and complex hidden meanings underlying each episode and see how they are related.

His book begins with the tale of the maiden Europa abducted by Zeus disguised as a majestic white bull (**1**, **2** and **3**), which he unravels several times over, each time with

1. *The Abduction of Europa*, *circa* 1650, Guido Cagnacci (1601–63), oil on canvas.115.5cm x 94.5cm. Molinari Pradelli Collection, Castenaso (BO).

2. Wall painting showing Europa being abducted by Zeus, in the form of a bull, from the House of Jason, AD 20–25. 25cm x 99cm. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. Archivo Fotografico.



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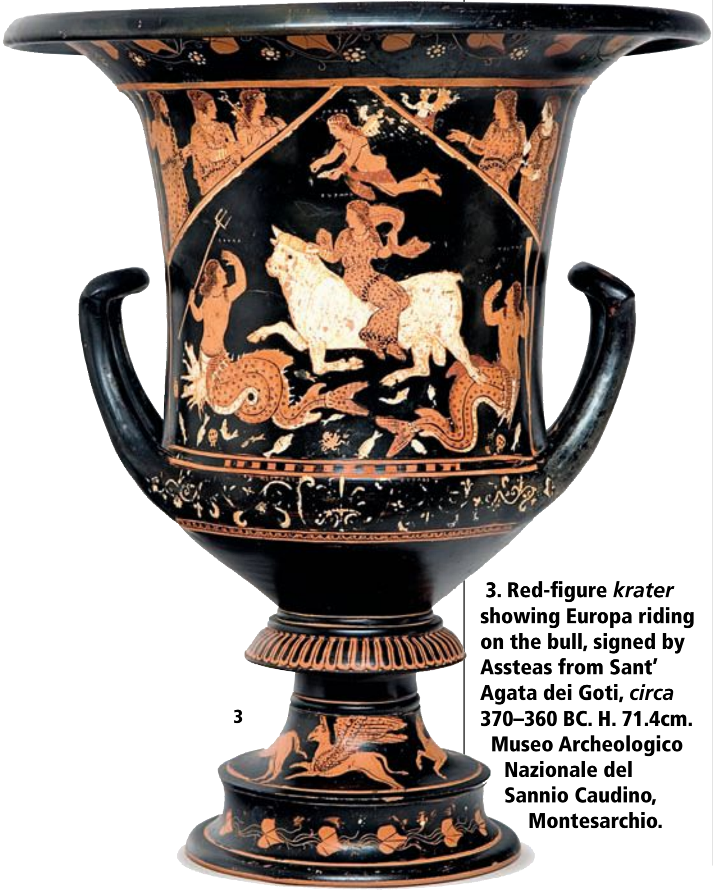

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3. Red-figure *krater* showing Europa riding on the bull, signed by Assteas from Sant' Agata dei Goti, *circa* 370–360 BC. H. 71.4cm. Museo Archeologico Nazionale del Sannio Caudino, Montesarchio.

different details. Eventually we reach the story of Cadmus and Harmony, the title of his book. Cadmus, the founder and first king of Thebes, was searching for Europa, who was his sister, when he found his bride, Harmonia. She was the daughter of Ares, the god of war, and of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

Included the exhibition are more than 80 splendid works of art including: red-figure vases, frescoes, marble and bronze statuary, cameos (**6**), silverware, including a mirror (**4**), terracottas, frescoes and paintings. Dating from the 5th century BC to the Hellenistic and the Roman period, to the Renaissance, and also from the 16th and 17th centuries, they are on loan from many international museums, as well as from Pompeii and elsewhere in Southern Italy.

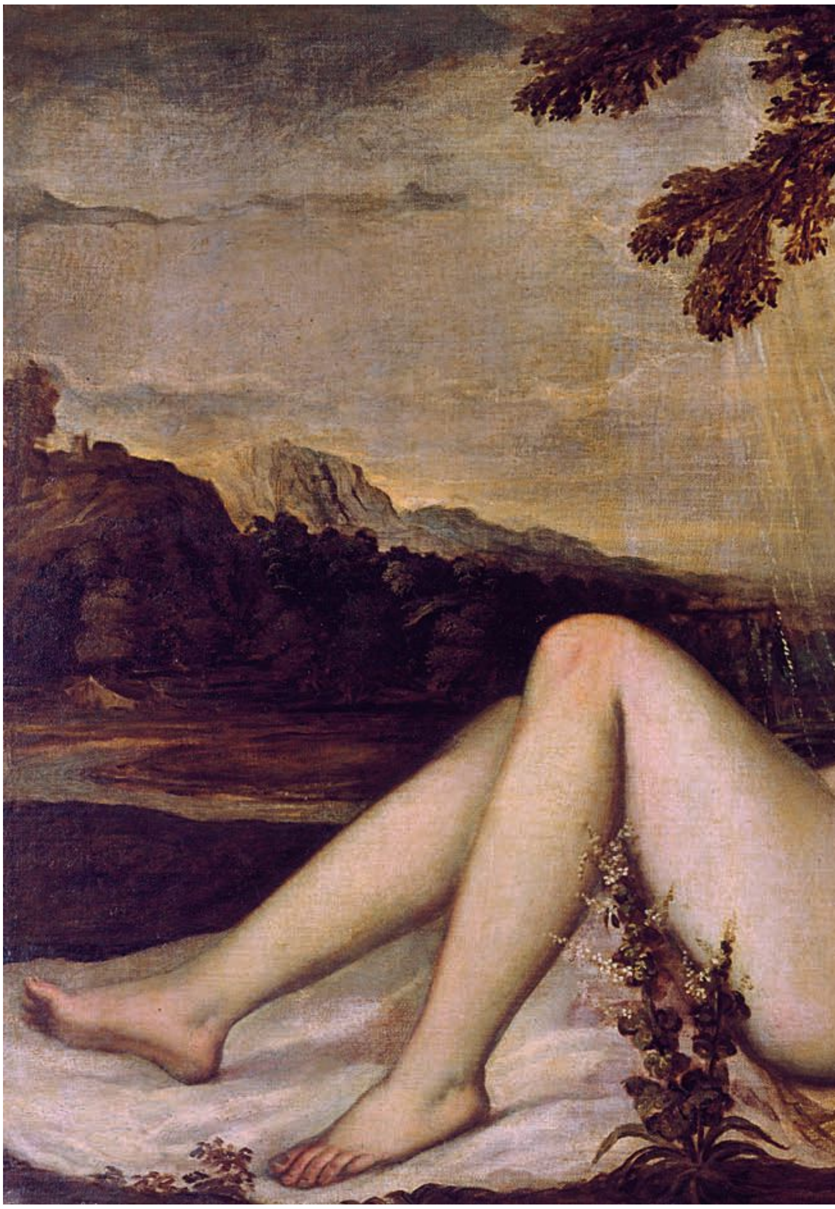
Amori Divini offers us a fascinating journey through Greek mythology following two narrative themes – seduction and transformation. At least one of the principal figures, man or woman, god or goddess, changes shape and is transformed into an animal, a tree, a cloud, a shower of gold, or even into a star that defines a constellation. These star patterns that have been known to navigators for millennia are woven into the tales. The nymph Callisto, for instance, metamorphoses into a she-bear and ultimately into the constellation Ursa Major (The Great Bear).

Early depictions of these ancient myths come from a selection of outstanding 5th-century BC vases from the Neapolitan museum's vast and celebrated collection of painted pottery from Magna Graecia. Two vases show Zeus seducing Danae. '*Danae's beauty was locked away… a small room enclosed her. Yet she was a princess too, and Zeus in a rain of gold poured love upon her*' is how Sophocles described the scene in Antigone, *circa* 441 BC. Danae was the only daughter of the King of Argos who locked her up to prevent her from having a child, who was prophesied to grow up and one day kill him.

This scene became a favourite of post-Renaissance painters (**5**), as did another instance of Zeus' passion for a mortal woman, Leda, the wife of the king of Sparta. Once again sexual union can only take place if the god transforms himself into a mortal being. The woman would otherwise be destroyed by the impact of union with a god. This time the mighty god takes on the shape of a white swan. The scene appears on several outstanding

4. Silver mirror showing Leda and the Swan, late 1st century BC–early 1st century AD, from the Villa della Pisanella at Boscoreale. 28.7cm x 16.7cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photograph: Musée du Louvre, Paris.

5. *Danae and the golden rain, circa* 1555–60, Andrea Meldolla detto lo Schiavone (1522–63), oil on canvas. 118cm x 147cm. Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples. Archivio Fotografico.



'Myth is the foundation of life; it is the timeless pattern, the pious formula, into which life flows when it reproduces its traits out of the unconscious.'
Thomas Mann: *Freud and the Future,* 1936

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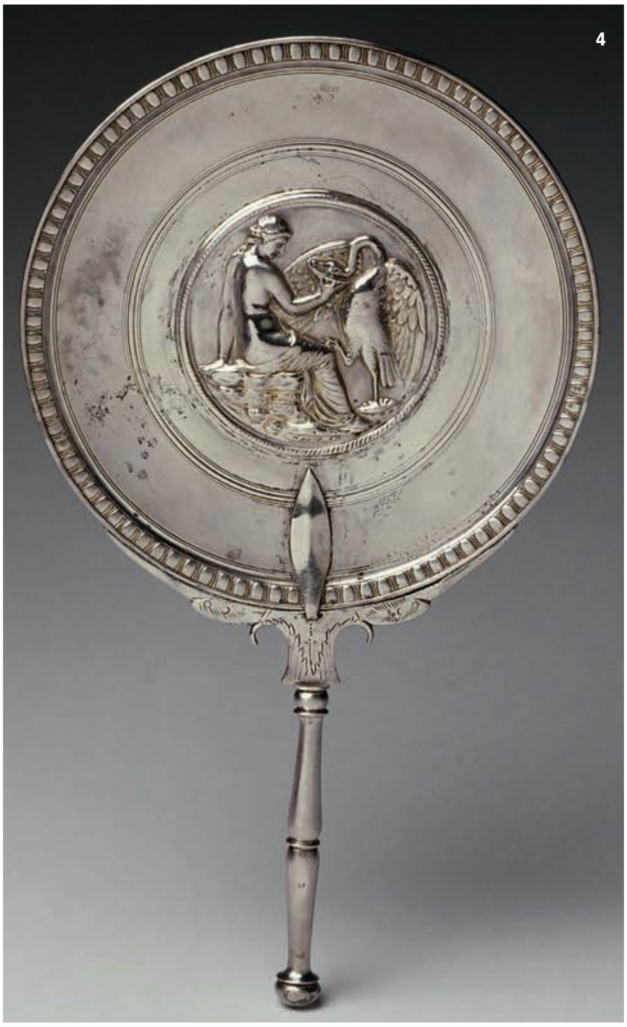
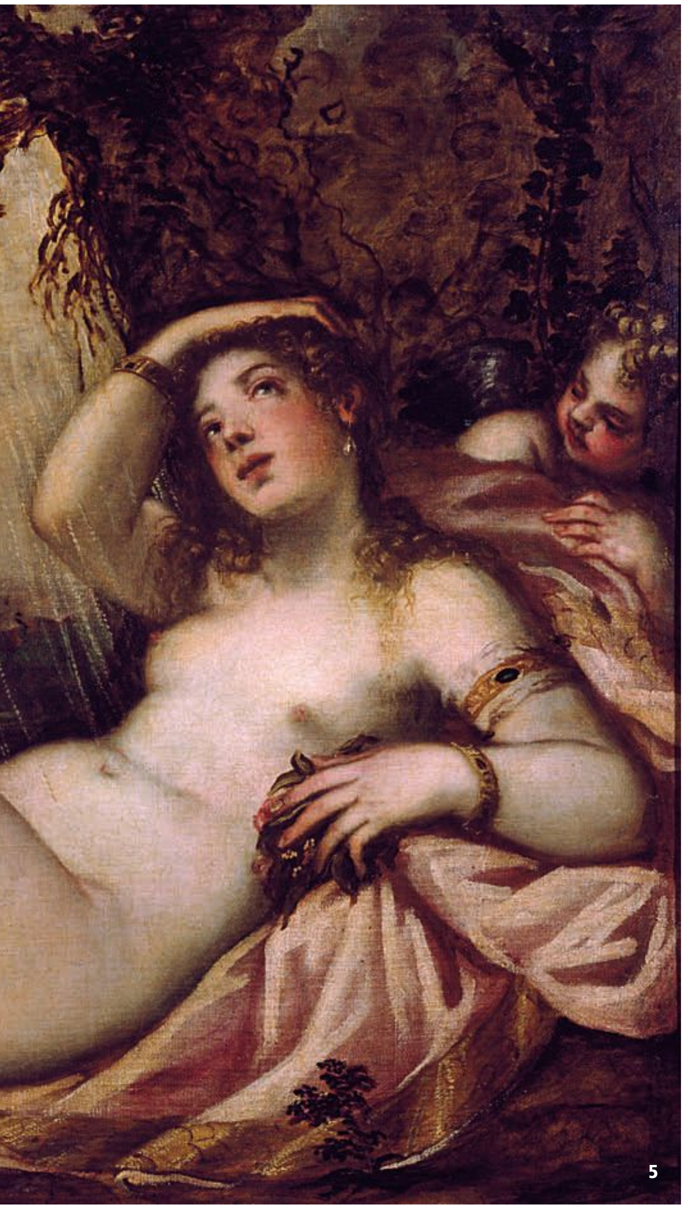


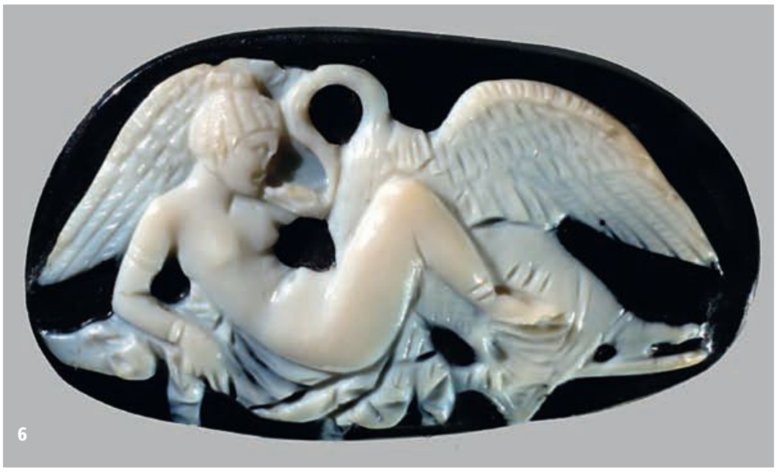


works of art of different periods, from archaic Greek to European Renaissance. In some versions of the myth Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world and the cause of the Trojan War, was born from the swan's egg that resulted from their union (7).

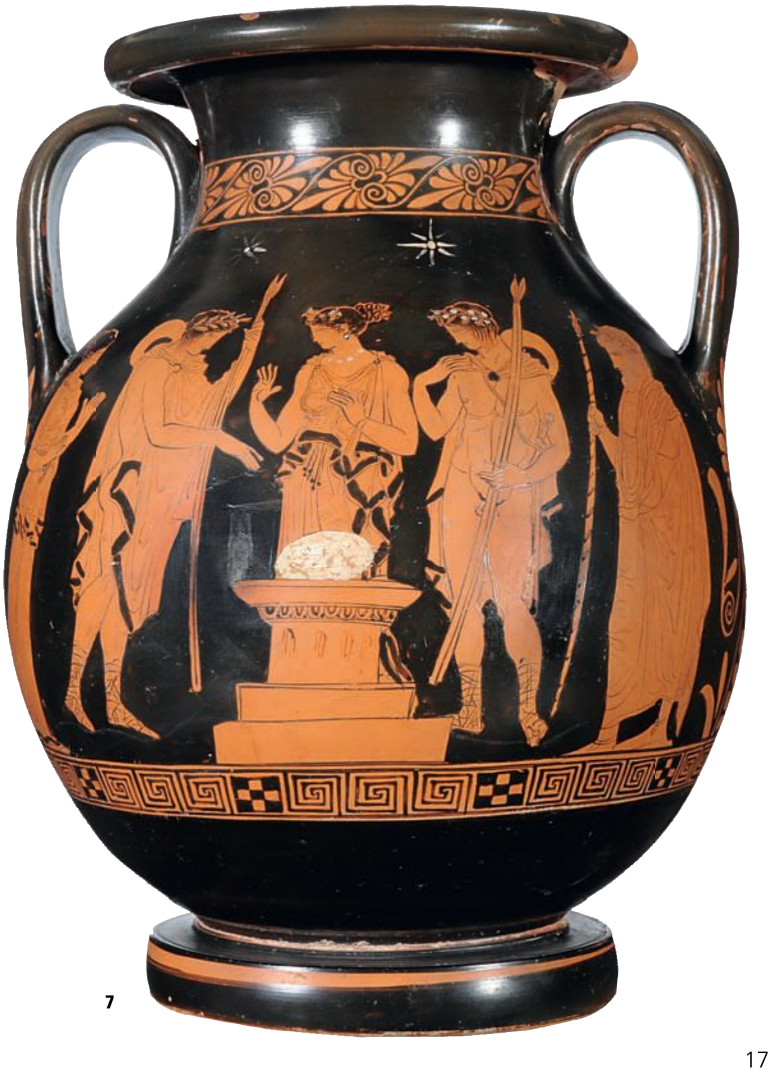
Lustful Zeus not only seduces women but also handsome youths like the Trojan prince Ganymede, the most beautiful of all mortals. This time he becomes an eagle to snatch the youth and take him to Mount Olympus where he rewards him by making him the immortal cupbearer destined forever to serve the pantheon of gods (**11**).

In this, as in other stories, from the first vibrations of the libido all individual choice is crushed by fate as the gods take hold and cast their nets to control the unfolding drama.

The early works of art displayed here are often votive gifts that reflect cosmological beliefs, teachings and cult practices concerning the creation of the world and its nature, as well as social and political customs. Later Hellenistic, Roman and Renaissance sculptures and paintings play on the impact of theatrical and dramatic scenes that when not overtly sexually explicit and voyeuristic are full of erotic innuendoes.



6. Cameo showing Leda and the swan, agate, 3rd century AD. 1.5cm x 2.7cm. Unknown provenance. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. Archivio Fotografico.



7. Red-figure *pelike* (terracotta jug with oval body and handles), showing Leda's egg on an altar, attributed to the painter of Nikas, found in a tomb in Via Equino, Naples, 425–400 BC. H.37.1cm. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. Archivio Fotografico.

A case in point is the many sculptures and paintings of Hermaphroditus, the bi-gender child of Aphrodite and Hermes, who has long been a symbol of androgyny or effeminacy. He or she is portrayed as a female figure with male genitals, often asleep in a provocative pose, revealing his half-hidden body, or struggling to avoid the advances of a satyr (**9**).

The myth of Hermaphroditus is ambiguous as to who is the willing victim of the erotic chase. Hermaphroditus was born a boy. As a youth he roamed wild forests to hunt. There, he encountered the rebellious, sexually aggressive nymph Salmacis bathing in a pool. She was overcome by lust for this handsome, voluptuous youth and tried to seduce him, but was rejected. When he thought she had gone Hermaphroditus undressed and entered the pool (8). Then Salmacis sprang out from behind a tree, jumped into the water and wrapped herself around the irresistible adolescent. As he struggled against her, she called out to the gods that they should never part. Her wish was granted, and their bodies blended to become one.

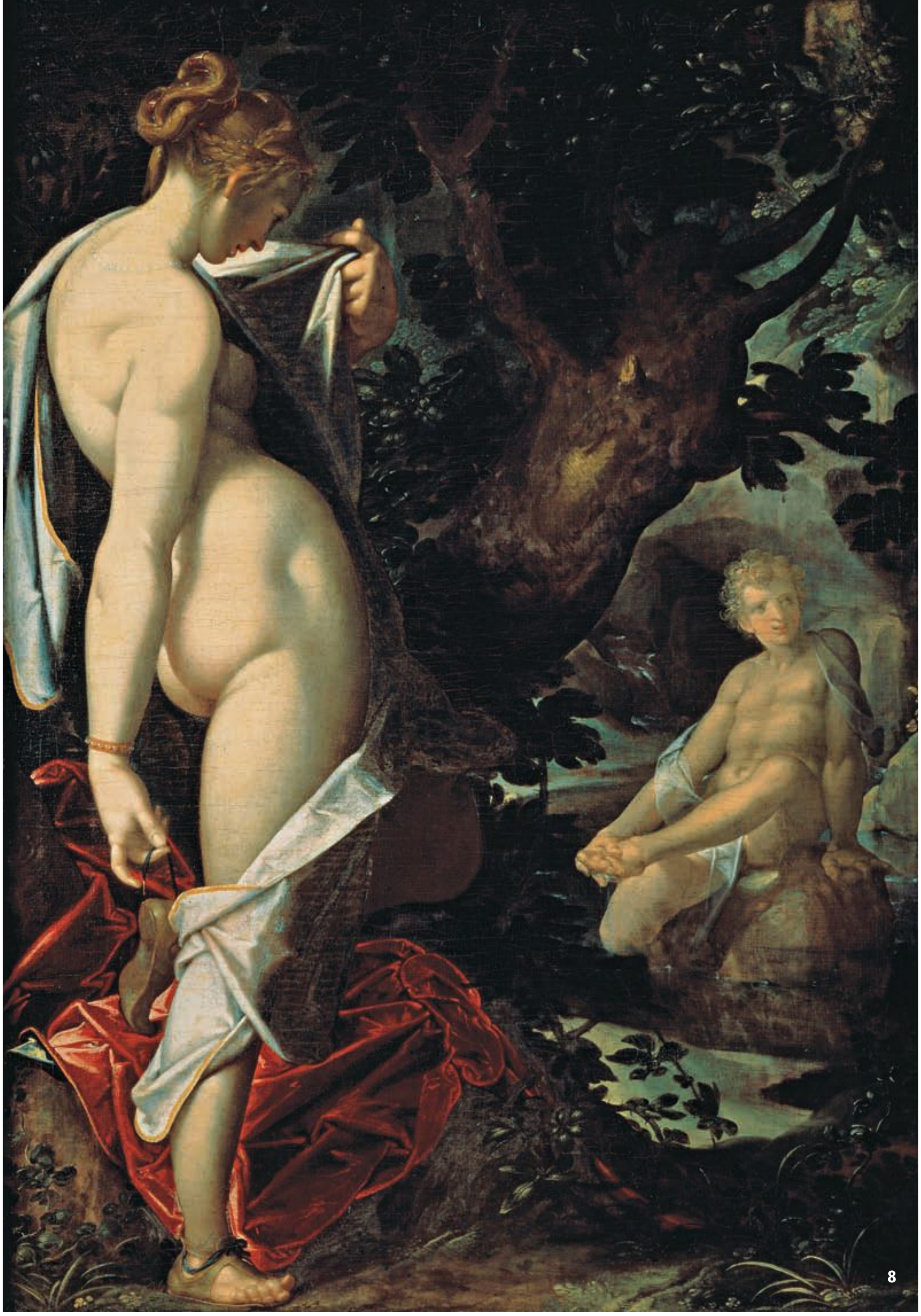
In the 4th century BC and probably before this, hermaphrodites – both man and woman in one – were linked to fertility cults. They also presided over marriage in the same way that *hijras* (transvestites, eunuchs and hermaphrodites) still do in Southern Asia today.

Here, there is a hidden, symbolic meaning, often represented in special secret rituals enacting the play of life forces and psychological impulses that are quite distinct from traditional gender roles. The composite body of Hermaphroditus stands for the union of opposites whereby the male half evokes the masculine principle, the passive force of the universe, while the female half represents the feminine principle, the active force. Together the union of these two energies generates the whole universe, a totality that lies beyond duality.

A cruel fate awaits another young hunter in a different myth. Actaeon is punished by the goddess Artemis for having unwittingly intruded on her privacy and seen her bathing naked. For his unexpected glimpse, he is transformed into a stag. Thus the hunter becomes the hunted and Actaeon is dismembered by his own hounds, which no longer recognise him (10 and 12). In the *Bacchae* (405 BC) the playwright Euripides (*circa* 480–406 BC) uses a slightly different version of the myth in which the young man is punished for having boasted that he is a better hunter than Artemis.

In another myth Artemis' immortal brother, Apollo, takes his ire out on the nymph Daphne for not wanting to lose her freedom and virginity even to this powerful, bountiful god. She refuses to obey her father, who wants her to marry and have children. She would rather accept her punishment, to be turned into a laurel tree, than yield to Apollo's divine advances. '*Your beauty itself, Daphne, prevents your wish, and your loveliness opposes your prayer*' comments Ovid in *Metamorphoses*, (Book 1, 473–567).

Greek myths are known to us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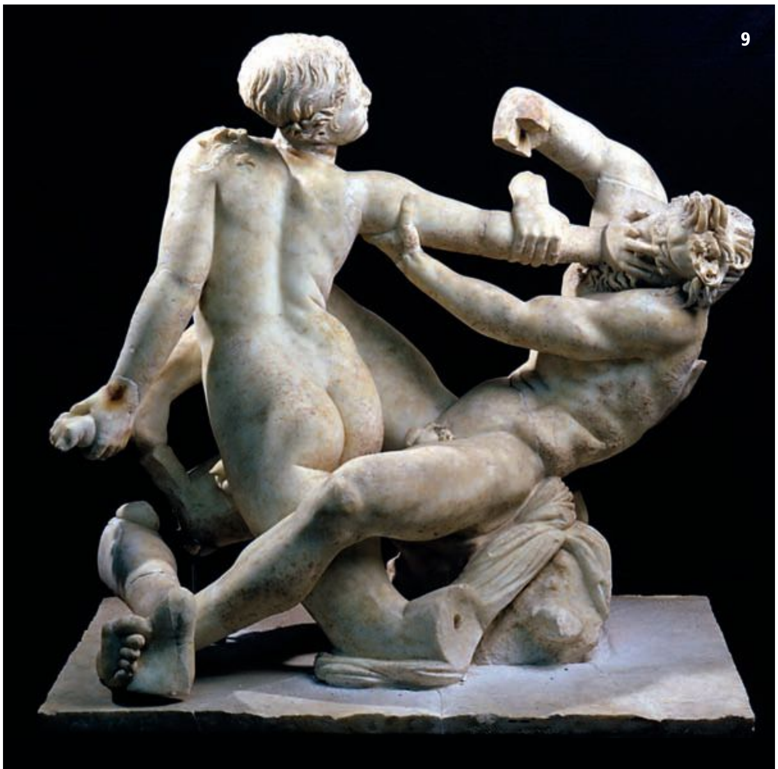
8. *Hermaphroditus and Salmacis*, 1580–82, Bartholomäus Spranger (1546–1611), oil on canvas, from the collection of Rudolph II in Prague. 110.5cm x 81.5cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Vienna.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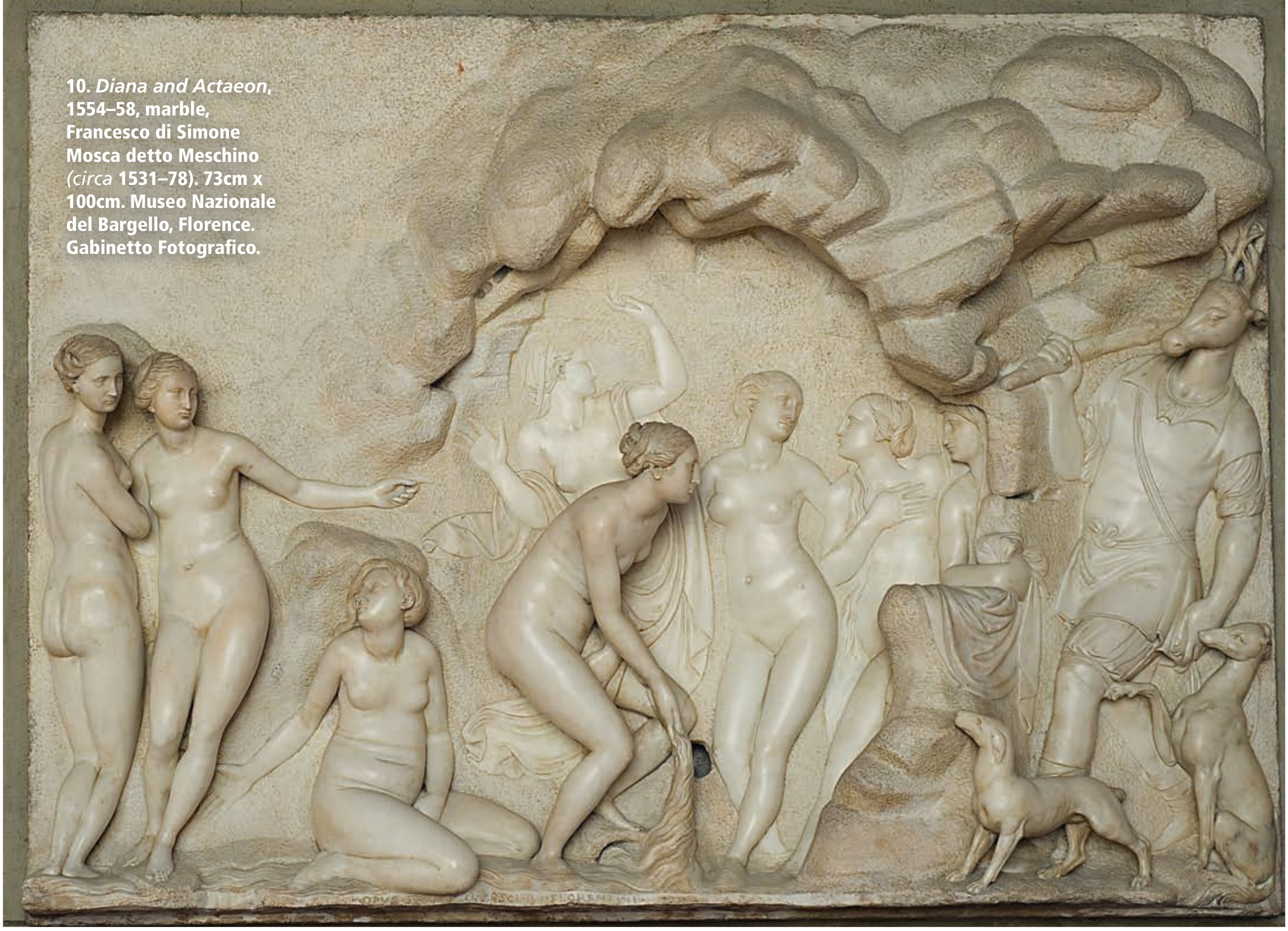
9. *Satyr and Hermaphroditus*, 1st century AD, marble, found at Torre Annunziata, south of the Natatio of the so-called Villa of Poppea. H. 100cm. Parco Archeologico di Pompei, Pompeii.



10. ***Diana and Actaeon*****, 1554–58, marble, Francesco di Simone Mosca detto Meschino (*****circa*** **1531–78). 73cm x 100cm. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. Gabinetto Fotografico.**

today through literature and archaeological finds but there are no definitive or authoritative versions recorded in canonical texts – on the contrary, many variants of the myths were the inspiration for songs, dances, poetry, plays and art from the Geometric period (*circa* 900–800 BC) onwards.

Artists have reshaped mythological source material, adapting it to suit the taste of new audiences, or in response to political situations. Although these tales were bases of Greek tragedies, playwrights were not expected to reproduce hallowed myths faithfully when adapting them for the stage. They relied instead on suspense to interest their audiences, so that they would not know the outcome of a play. Myths therefore remain cryptic, their meaning elusive and open to many interpretations according to different times and places. Whether they are taken at face value or seen as metaphors, they remain enigmatic.

11. ***Ganymede and the Eagle*****, 1817. Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), plaster. H.95cm. L. 120cm. W.46cm. Collezioni dell'Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome.**

12. Terracotta ***pinax*****, or bas relief, showing Actaeon killed by his hounds, from the Greek necropolis in Contrada Lucifero at Locri. 475–450 BC. 17.1cm x 16.4cm. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Reggio Calabria.**

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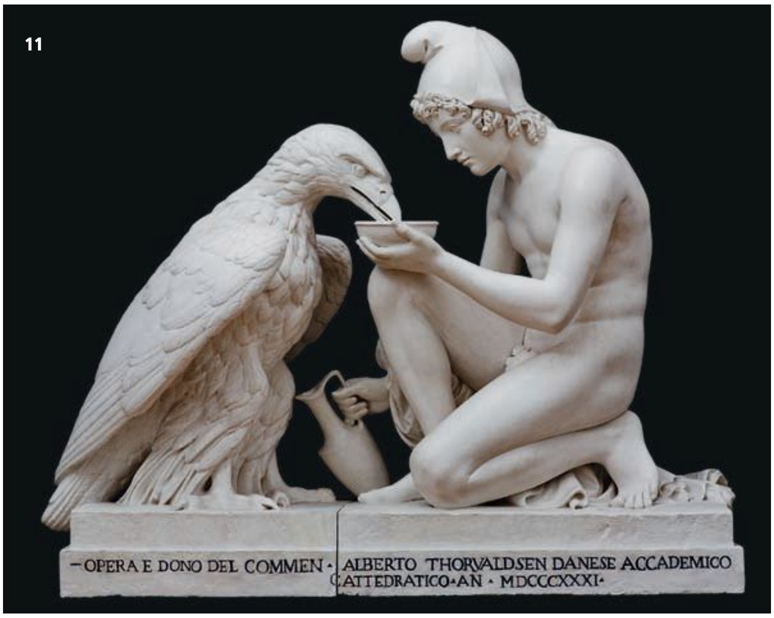
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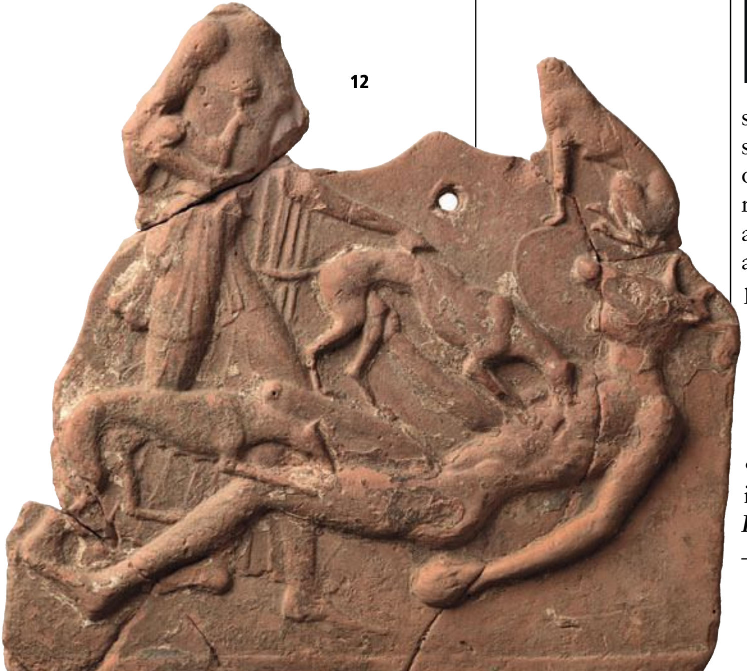
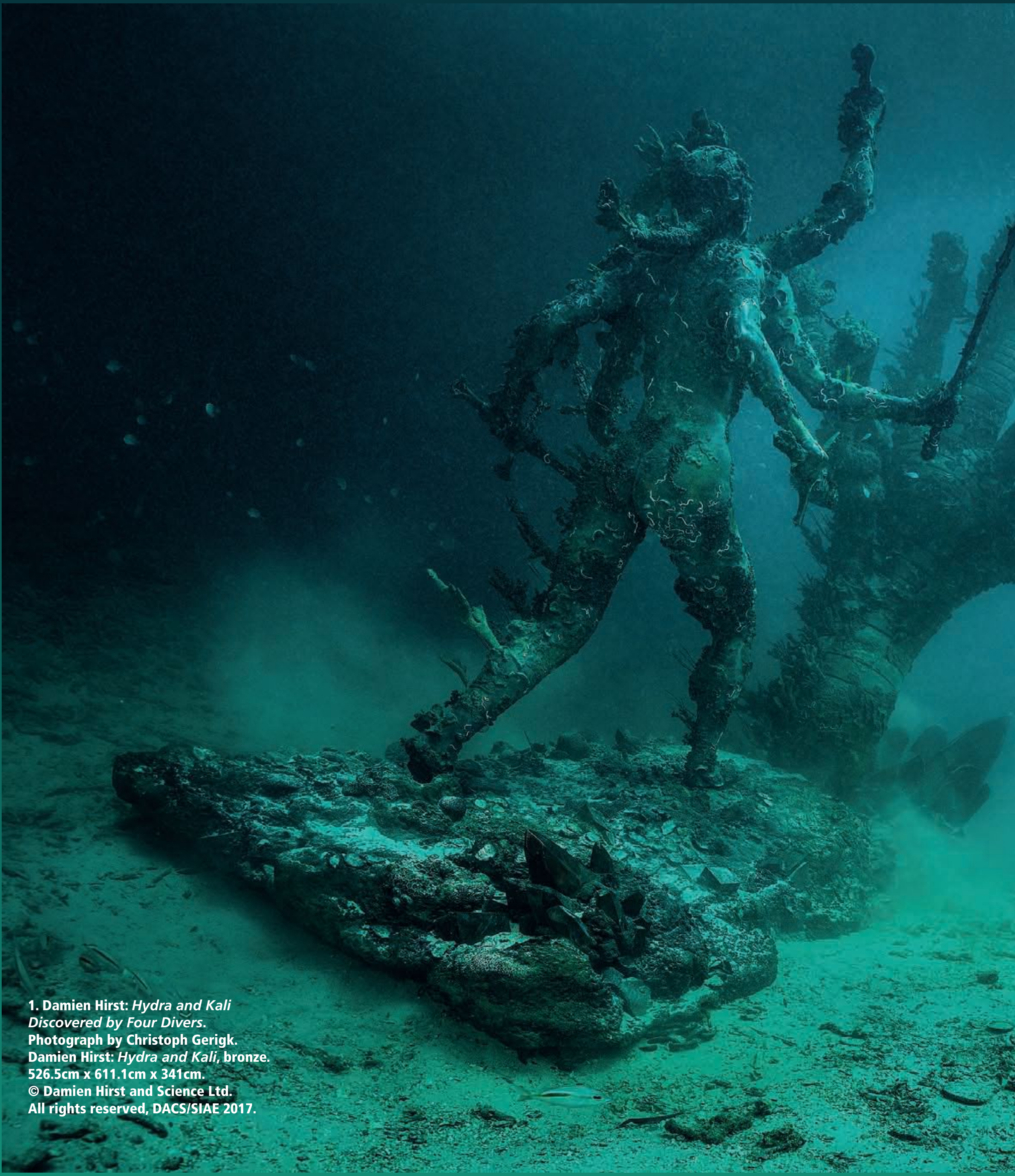


Roberto Calasso makes a relationship between myth and the emergence of modern consciousness. If he met Ovid, they would have a lot to talk about. ■

- *Amori divini (The Loves of the Gods)* is on show at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples (www.museoarcheologiconapoli.it) until 16 October 2017. The exhibition catalogue (in Italian only), edited by A Anguissola and C Capaldi, is published by Electa at €32.
- *Le nozze di Cadmo e Armonia* by Roberto Calasso (1988) translated into English by Tim Parks, was re-titled *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* and published by Knopf (1993).

Unbelievable



1. Damien Hirst: *Hydra and Kali Discovered by Four Divers*.
Photograph by Christoph Gerigk.
Damien Hirst: *Hydra and Kali*, bronze.
526.5cm x 611.1cm x 341cm.
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treasures

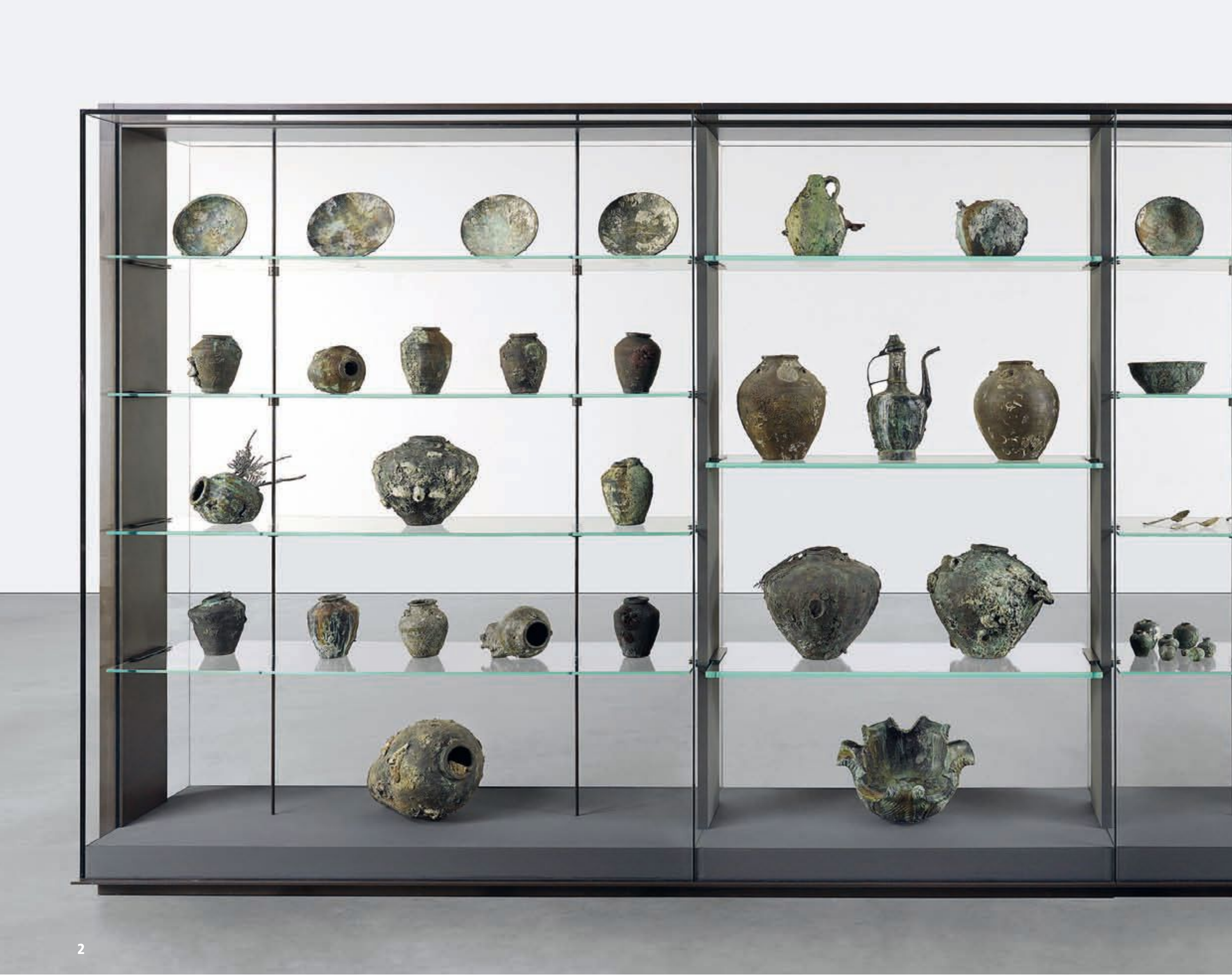
Is Damien Hirst's trove of 'antiquities' brought up from the sea-bed just a shipload of crock, or is it an historically accurate, if anarchistic, tribute to marine archaeology? **Sean A Kingsley** tries to fathom the answer

Roll up, roll up for the greatest show on earth. As Venice slowly sinks beneath the waves, *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable*, 189 of them in all, have surfaced in artist Damien Hirst's latest, boldest extravaganza, which has been a decade in the making, at the Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana.

The bad boy of Brit Art invites us on a voyage of discovery to gawp at a 2000-year-old lost cargo once shipped on the *Apistos* (the *Unbelievable*) by the powerful Roman art collector Aulus Calidius Amotan, whose costly write-off would become enshrined in the *Dinner Conversations* of Apollonius of Samos. Hirst's supposed sponsorship of the wreck's salvage off East Africa is given a patina of real time and place through moody underwater video and stills tracking the artworks as found from the sea floor to the surface.

Big, brash and splendidly over the top, with a creative price tag exceeding $50million, *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* confuses art critics like no other mega-show of recent years. Some can't see beyond what they judge to be its offensive scale and cost. Others accuse Hirst of conceit, glowing in acclaim for art that was actually made by a team of artisans. It's as wrong, they say,

Hirst's supposed sponsorship of the wreck's salvage off East Africa is given a patina of real time and place through moody underwater video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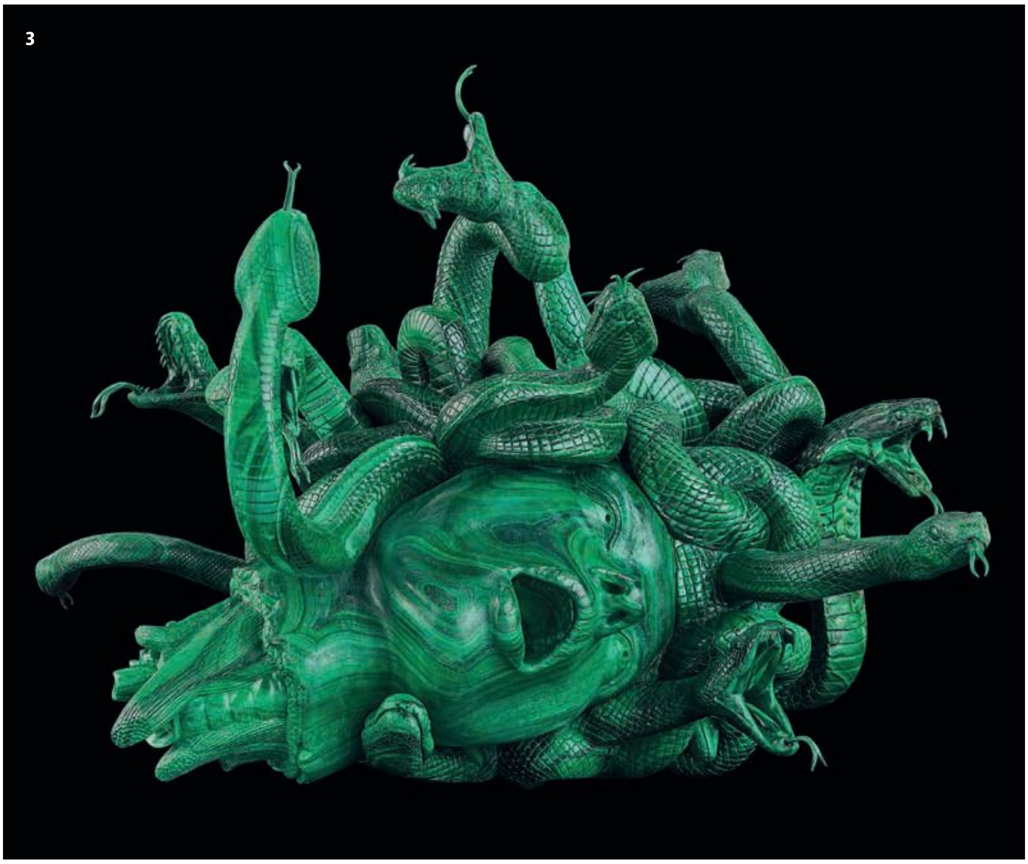
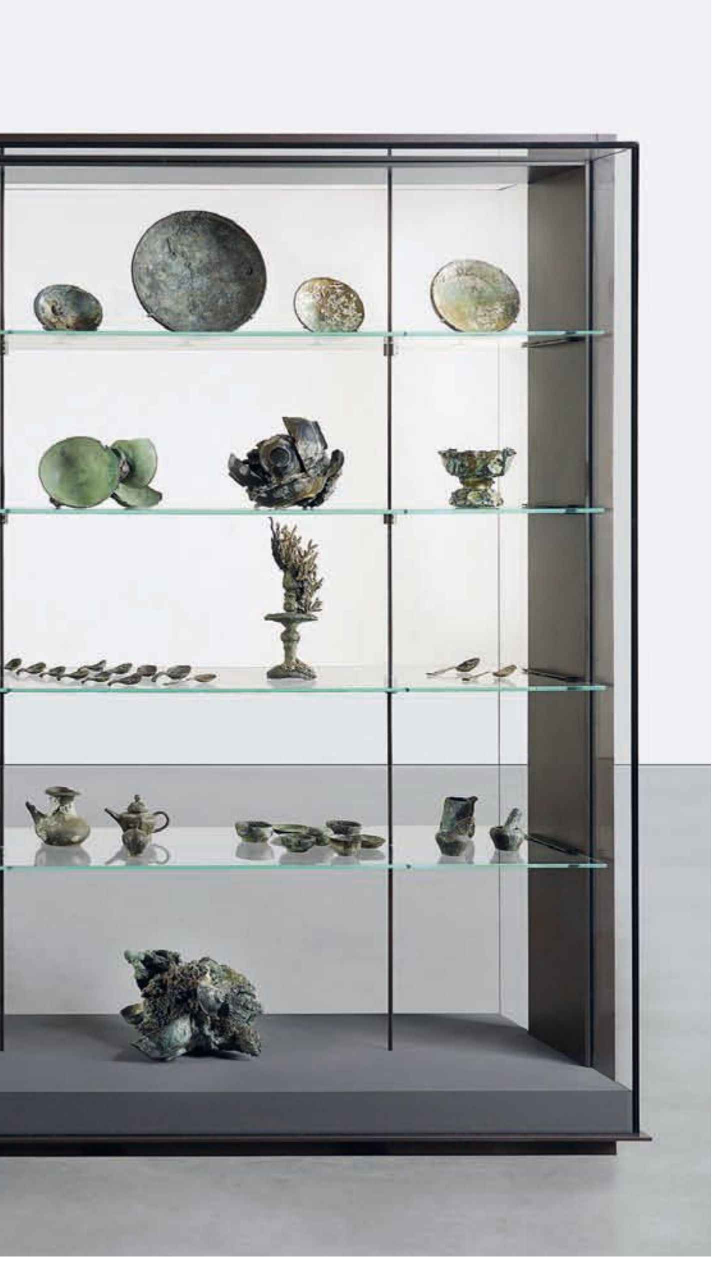


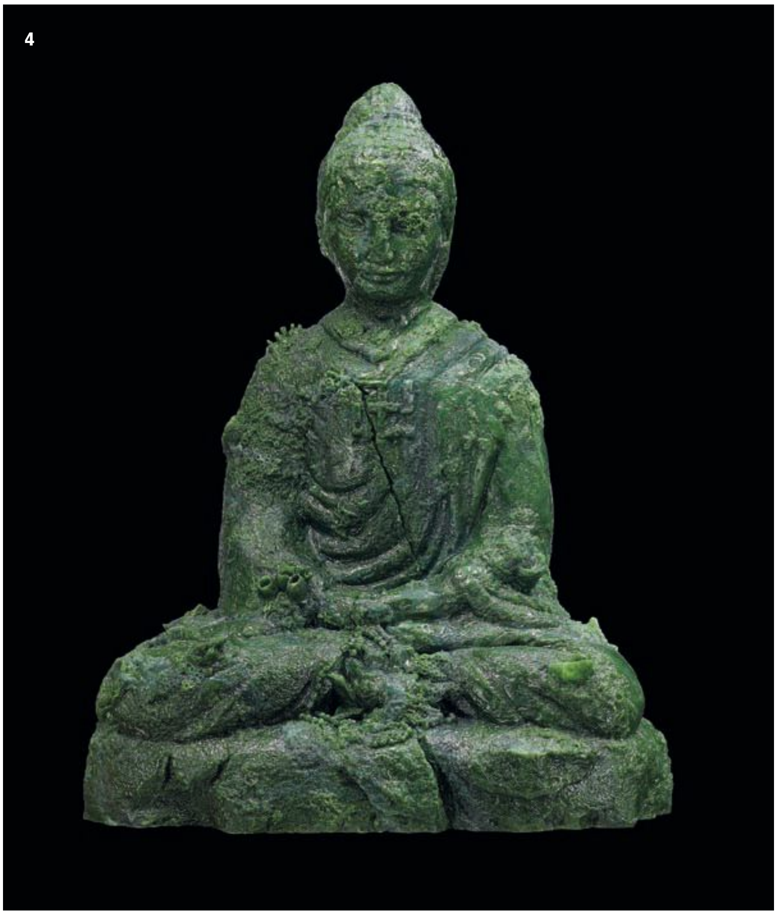
as the boxing promoter Don King taking credit for Muhammad Ali's genius in the ring.

Mostly the theme has baffled art critics expecting to see ancient masterworks, but finding themselves instead immersed among obvious fakes mixing mythological monsters with statues of modern celebrities, such as American singer-songwriter Pharrell Williams transformed into an Egyptian pharaoh. So what does Damien Hirst think he's doing other than flashing deep pockets?

Beyond the hype of this exhibition is an homage to the past rooted in sound historic plausibility. Plenty in the backdrop is more Jacques Cousteau than Walt Disney. The concept penetrates the depths of time, returning to a Roman past lusting for luxury to show off in 'des res' waterfront villas, such as those once lining billionaires' row in the Bay of Naples.

Several wrecks stuffed to the gunwales with Greek and Roman statues are the real-world inspiration for Hirst's glitz. Even a setting off East Africa isn't as madcap as it





2. Damien Hirst: ***A Collection of Vessels from the Wreck of the Unbelievable.*** **Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.**

3. Damien Hirst: ***The Severed Head of Medusa*****, malachite. 37cm x 43cm x 58cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.**

4. Damien Hirst: ***Jade Buddha*****, jade. 102cm x 81.5cm x 51.4cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.**

> The concept penetrates the depths of time, returning to a Roman past lusting for luxury goods to show off in 'des res' waterfront villas

first sounds. Let me explain why.

Shortly before Easter 1900 bored Turkish divers sitting out a storm in the sheltered bay of Antikythera bolted on their brass hard helmets to seek a little cash searching out sponges nine fathoms down. No sooner had Elias Stadiatis hit the seabed than he surfaced fast and terrified, babbling about '*a heap of dead naked women, rotting and syphilitic, horses, green corpses*'. What would become later celebrated as the 'Antikythera shipwreck', a Roman argosy of artistic masterpieces lost *circa* 80–50 BC, was quickly salvaged by the Greek navy.

A few years later in June 1907 another sponge-diver came across what he said '*looked like a lot of big guns*' three miles off the Tunisian coastal city of Mahdia. Soon after, Alfred Merlin, the Director of Tunisian Antiquities, swooped on the wreck and went on to salvage its wonders for another six years.

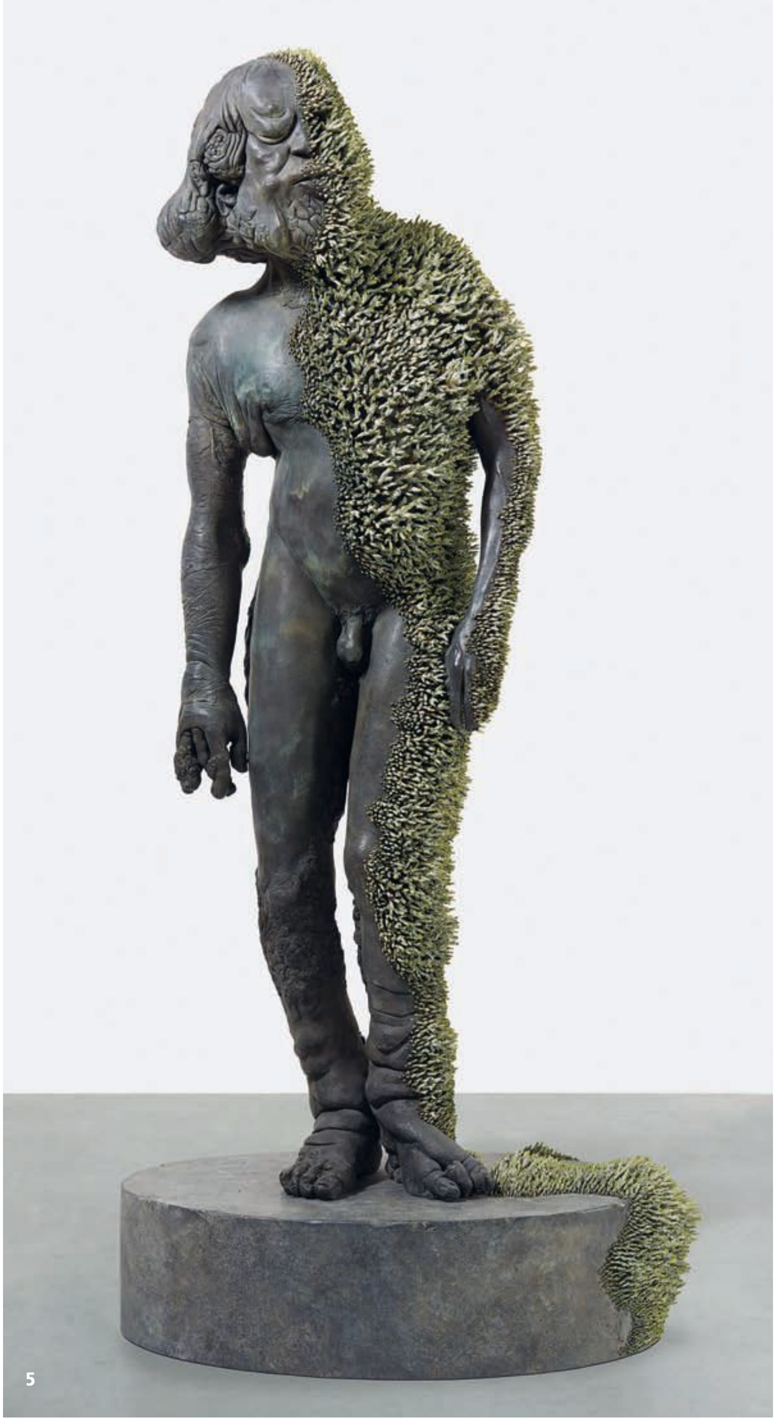
In his 1954 book *4,000 Years Under the Sea*, the French explorer Philippe Diolé recalled how '*Gods emerged from the water covered with shellfish, unrecognizable, and many of them mutilated… Twenty fathoms down, in a sea so muddy that no eye could penetrate it, a man was busy searching for the past, hard on the track of yet further masterpieces…*'

The divers' cannons proved to be 60 Roman marble columns stacked below a hoard of statues, including an Eros, grotesque dwarves and clowns, an antique herm (a sculpted head on squared plinth) signed by the artist Boethos, alongside architectural decorations, such as beds, urns and candelabra, all made of bronze. Included in the marble cache was a bust of Aphrodite, statues of Pan and of two satyrs, torsos of youths and fragments of other full-sized statues. The Mahdia cargo, sunk between 90–60 BC, has been valued at 857,000 *sesterces* – a cool $10.7 million. That price tag would be worth at least 10 times as much in today's antiquities market.

The historic arc that links these wealth-laden wrecks with Damien Hirst's modern fantasies finds a mutual home in Rome's obsessive, Mediterranean-wide hunt for luxury goods. This is the world of one of history's most notorious plunderers of art, Gaius Verres, legate to the governor of Cilicia in 80 BC and proprietor of Sicily in 73–70 BC. Verres ransacked Sicily so heavily that Cicero put him on trial for misconduct and extortion. The great orator made sure everyone would know in perpetuity that '*there is no silver vase, neither Corinthian nor Delian, no gem or pearl, no object of gold or of ivory, no bronze, marble or ivory statue, no picture either painted on a tablet or woven in a tapestry, which he has not sought out, inspected, and, if it pleased him, stolen*'.

But if Roman treasure-ships were a reality, what was the *Apistos*, or *Unbelievable*, doing when it sunk off East Africa, a world away from the calm of the Mediterranean Sea?

Again, Hirst's sources stack up as the artist sets his discovery along the ancient world's most exotic sea-lane. By the last quarter of the 1st century BC, 120 Roman ships sailed for the markets of India and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5. Damien Hirst: *Proteus,* bronze. 241.3cm x 98.1cm x 65.5cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.

6. Damien Hirst: *Remnants of Apollo*, patinated Etruscan limestone, 138cm x 155cm x 311.5cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.

7. Damien Hirst: *The Sadness*, gold. 4cm x 17.7cm x 15cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.

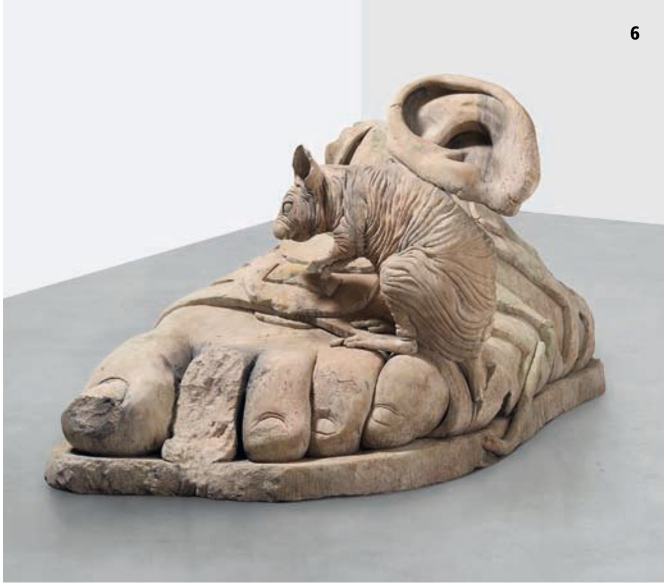
Africa every year on huge teakwood merchantmen up to 500 tons in capacity. India was the last word in Roman luxury for everything from cinnamon and pepper to pearls, bloodstones, emeralds, diamonds, sapphires, drugs, eunuchs and panthers. Lakshmi Indian ivory statuettes were even imported to well-appointed Pompeii.

But even if the 1700km voyage to northwest India was well charted in maps, skippers sailing south to Africa (which Rome called '*the Far Side*') had to avoid fierce tribes of barbarians and troglodytes. In the Ethiopian and Somali ports of Adulis and Rhapta near Zanzibar, traders sailed five to 20 days to barter trinkets (axes, cloaks and cheap glass) for slaves, ivory, tortoise shell, rhinoceros horn and scented wood used in perfumes.

The dangerous eastern trade to India and Africa brought riches beyond the imagination. Single voyages generated profits of nine million *sesterces,* the equivalent of perhaps $112 million today. Financial returns of 10–1 were commonplace, while some goods were hawked in Western markets at 100 times their purchase cost. As the Roman historian Pliny the Elder reminds us: '*By the smallest computation, India, the Seres and the Arabian peninsula take 100 million sesterces from our empire every year – so much do our luxuries and our women cost us*.' Archaeologists are currently digging up underwater the first, 2000-year-old Roman era shipwreck found as far east as Godavaya off Sri Lanka.

But that is where the comparison ends. *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* borrows for

> What *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* illuminates is the power of the sunken past in the present day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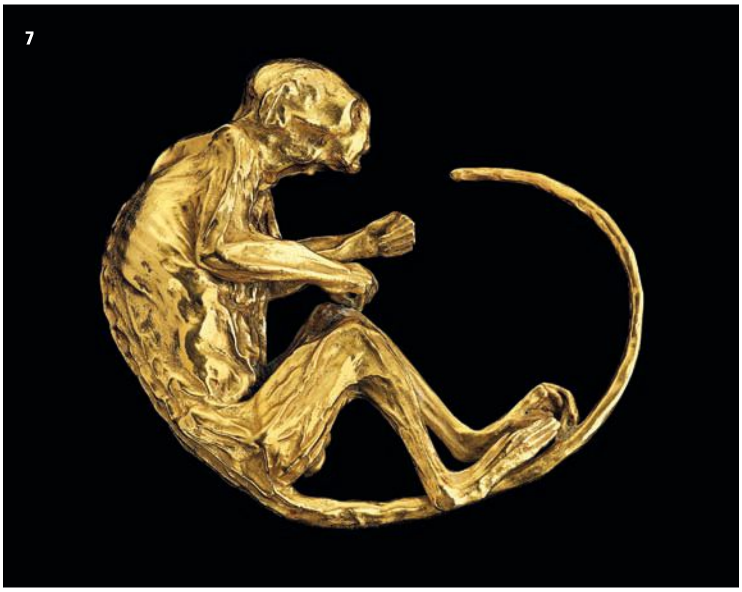
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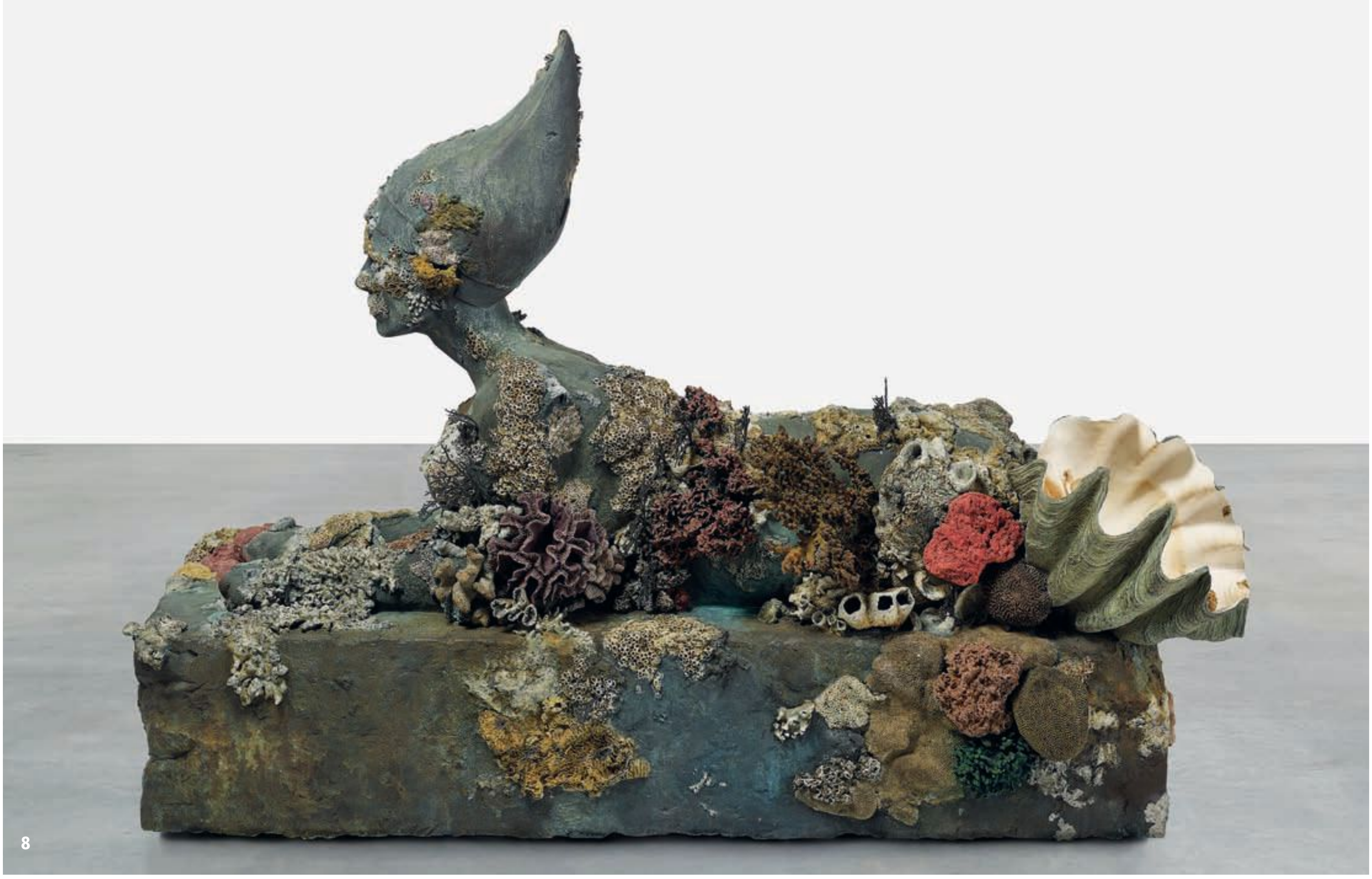


8. Damien Hirst: *Sphinx*, bronze. 123.1cm x 177.5cm x 68.4cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.

inspiration with a broad brush from the rich text and sunken wreck goody-bag of the Roman world. This mega-show's theme is neither puzzling, nor a shipload of crock, but a smartly conceived artistic extravaganza. And the artist gets the big message inherited from Rome: size counts.

Rome was no ordinary empire, it was extraordinary in all things, modern America's big and brash society on steroids. From ports to ships and profits, as the first globalised society Rome thought huge. This is why Hirst's 'treasures' are intentionally mind-boggling in scale, number and setting and why his bronze *Demon With Bowl* centrepiece, more than 18 metres high, has more than a whiff of the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the (ancient) World, about it.

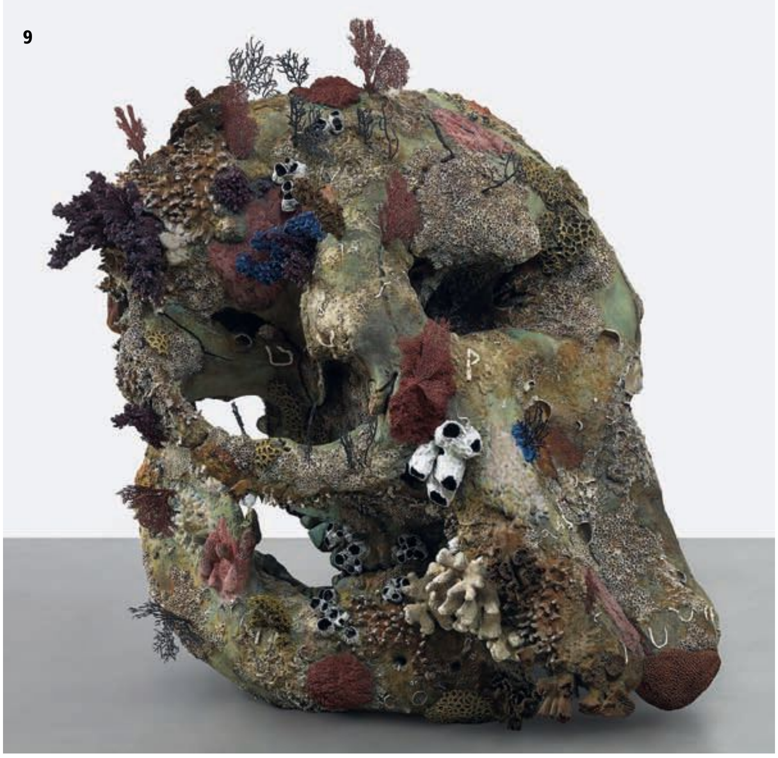
Damien Hirst is also right to recognise that collectors always appreciate antiquities – the older the better. Greek craftsmen exploited Rome's enthusiasm by producing copies of famous sculptured masterpieces shipped West. Workshops in Italy, dug up at Baiae in the Bay of Naples, recreated Greek sculpture for Roman connoisseurs. As the poet Horace wrote around 14 BC, '*Captive Greece took captive her savage conqueror and brought civilisation to the rustic Latins*'.

Foreshadowing the *Apistos*'s themes of fakery and imitation, the Antikythera shipwreck was carrying antique Greek masterworks, such as the over six-feet-high copy of a *Weary Hercules,* originally crafted by Lysippos in the 4th century BC, alongside contemporary Roman repros of Classical pieces.

What *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* illuminates is the power of the sunken past in the present day. When the Riace Warriors, two magnificent, life-sized, 5th-century BC Greek masterpieces found jettisoned in the ocean off Calabria, went on show in the National Museum of Reggio Calabria in August 1981, the size and enthusiasm of the crowds forced the museum to lock its iron gates. The local police were called as the masses stormed the entrance chanting '*I bronzi! I bronzi!*', threatening to tear the museum apart if they couldn't see these beloved bronze marvels.

Hirst's exhibition, too, has had queues of visitors wanting to gain entry to its twin venues in Venice – but no riots so far. The show certainly reflects the extraordinary power of ancient shipwrecks and their artistic cargo to inspire and

…the artist gets the big message inherited from Rome – size counts



9. Damien Hirst: *Skull of a Cyclops,* bronze. 135cm x 145cm x 120cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.

capture the imagination, a fine use of archaeology. Hirst concedes that the work '*taps into a desire for belief, for a connection with the past*'. Like all good myths, with a wink and a nudge, layers of physical truth rooted in archaeology have been twisted into what is a believable argosy of modern art. Hirst is laughing with us, not at us.

There is a final silver lining in the deliberate fakeness of this voyage of discovery. If Hirst had discovered and salvaged an authentic cargo of ancient treasure, he would have found himself in deep water. Today it is frowned upon to make money from the discovery of ancient shipwrecks. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, signed by Italy, forbids speculation or trade in sunken heritage.

Having concocted a mythic universe for the wreck of the believable *Apistos* that shows plenty of Cousteau alongside the Disneyesque – the French fisherman even returned to both Antikythera and Mahdia in search of overlooked wrecked treasures – Damien Hirst has smartly sidestepped heritage controversy and set the scene to one day sell off his collection for a vast profit. All very Roman and reminiscent of the modern 'think big' society. As Andy Warhol reminds us: '*Making money is the highest form of making art.*'

Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable may be something of a freak show, but it is a deliciously enthralling, humorous, brilliantly researched visual feast of a freak art show. Clever chap that Damien Hirst. Roll up, roll up. ■

Like all good myths, with a wink and a nudge, layers of physical truth rooted in archaeology have been twisted into what is a believable argosy of modern art

10. Damien Hirst: *Unknown Pharaoh,1* (detail), Carrara marble. 76cm x 54cm x 30.2cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.

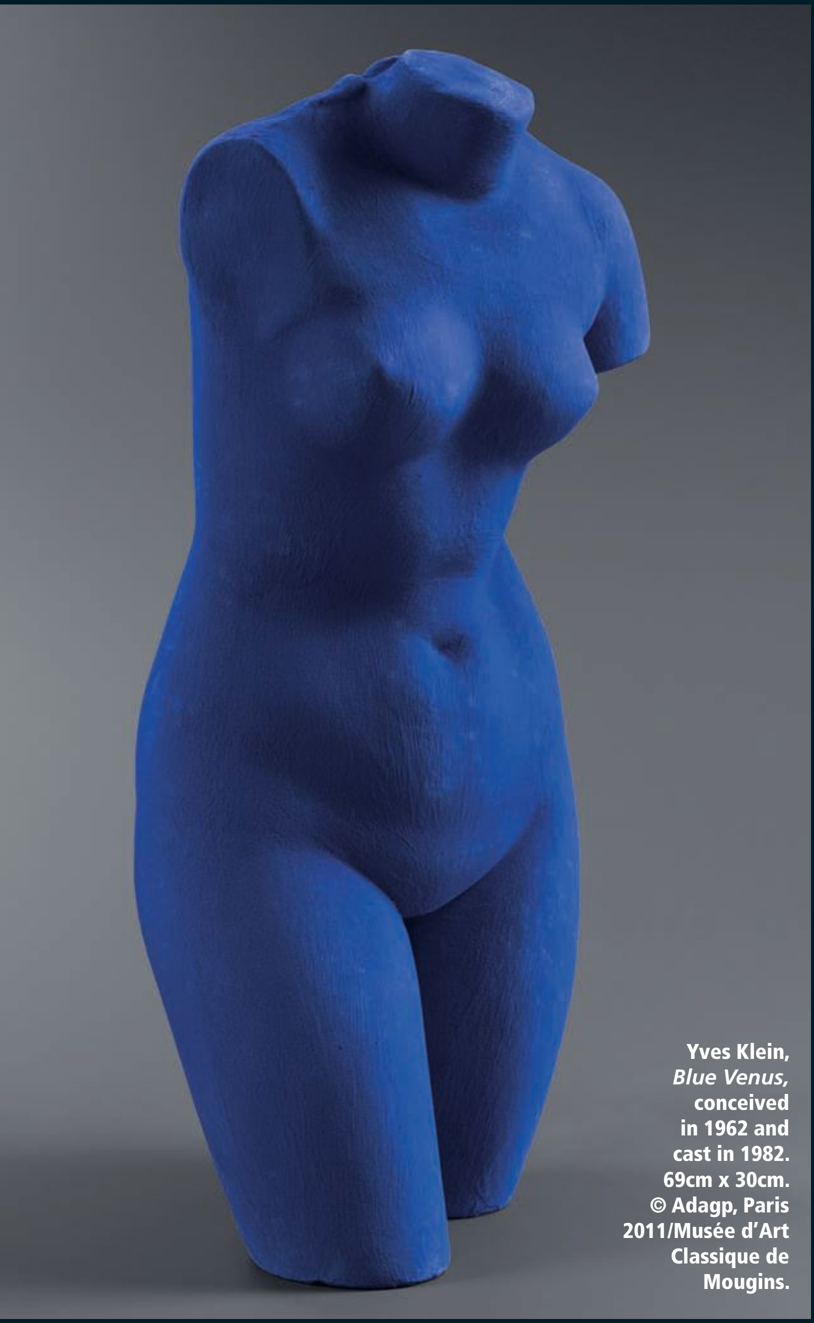
11. Damien Hirst: *The Severed Head of Medusa,* crystal glass. 41.7cm x 44.9cm x 39.7cm. Photograph by Prudence Cuming Associates © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS/SIAE 2017.

- *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable* **is on show at the Palazzo Grassi and the Punta della Dogana (www.palazzograssi.it) in Venice until 3 December 2017.**

Modern Classicisms: Classical Art and Contemporary Artists in Dialogue

9.30am–7pm Friday 10 November 2017
Great Hall, King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS

What is it about Greek and Roman art that still captivates the modern imagination? How can contemporary art help us to see the Classical legacy with new eyes? And what can such modern-day responses – set against the backdrop of others over the last two millennia – tell us about our own cultural preoccupations in the 21st century?



Yves Klein, *Blue Venus*, conceived in 1962 and cast in 1982. 69cm x 30cm. © Adagp, Paris 2011/Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins.

The art of ancient Greece and Rome is not just a thing of the past, it also exists in the present – whether as ideal, antitype or point of departure. During the 2017–2018 academic year, King's College London will host a range of events exploring contemporary responses to Classical traditions of image-making. This will include a major exhibition at Bush House in London, organised in collaboration with the Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins, from 2 March to 28 April 2018.

Our opening *Modern Classicisms* workshop on Friday 10 November sets out to explore the contemporary relevance of Classical traditions: by bringing together art historians, collectors, critics and artists, we aim to examine what the Classical artistic legacy means from the vantage-point of contemporary artistic practice. The workshop will take the form of a dialogue in the true sense of the word, avoiding the format of conventional academic conferences. The day will be structured around a range of thematic sessions – each opened with a short intervention, followed by a panel response and group discussion. Speakers and respondents include not only academic Classicists and art historians, but also curators, critics, journalists and, above all, artists themselves (including some of the most celebrated names in contemporary British art).

Confirmed participants include: Dalya Alberge, Ruth Allen, Tiphaine Besnard, Bruce Boucher, James Cahill, Léo Caillard, Michael Craig-Martin, Matthew Darbyshire, Charlotte Higgins, Brooke Holmes, Nick Hornby, Jessica Hughes, Patrick Kelley, Polina Kosmadaki, Issam Kourbaj, Christopher Le Brun, Lisa Le Feuvre, Christian Levett, Isabel Lewis, Simon Martin, Minna Moore-Ede, Robin Osborne, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Elizabeth Prettejohn, Marc Quinn, Asad Raza, Mary Reid Kelley, Alexandre Singh, Michael Squire, Caroline Vout and Sarah Wilson.

- *Modern Classicisms: Classical Art and Contemporary Artists in Dialogue* is co-organised with the Courtauld Institute of Art, in collaboration with the Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins (which has led the way in displaying ancient artefacts alongside contemporary art) and *Minerva*, The International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology.

- Registration is now open and, as places are limited, early booking is advised. To book visit www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/ahri/eventrecords/2016-2017/CHS/Modern-Classicisms.aspx

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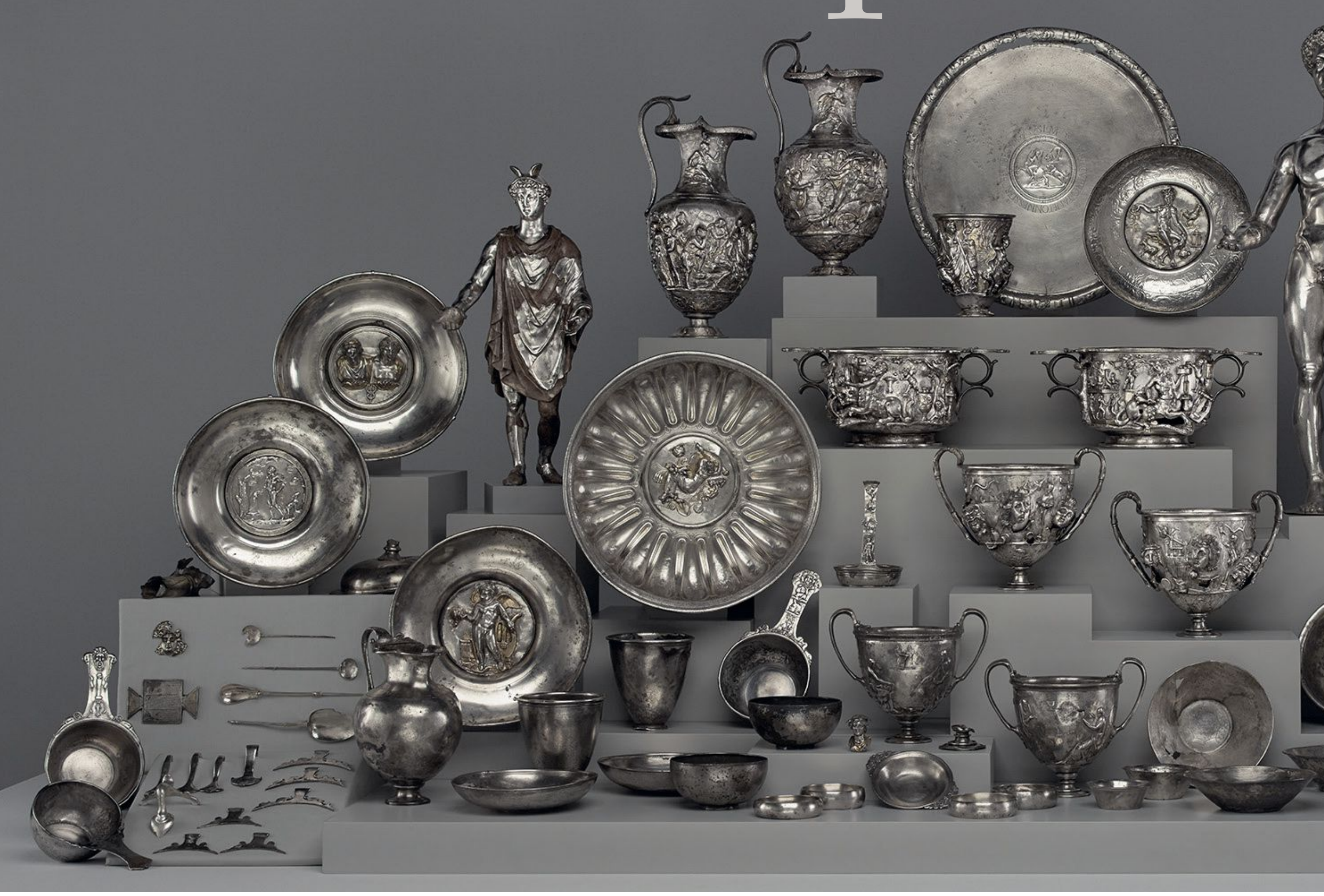
In the lap of



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Bling is nothing new. Certain privileged classes of citizens in the ancient world lived their lives decked out in stunning jewellery and dining off gold and silver plates. Some fine examples of these rich artefacts are on show in *Luxury in Antiquity*, a touring exhibition, which, over the past three years, has been shown at the Getty Villa in Los Angeles, the Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco, the Nelson Atkins Museum of Arts in Kansas City and at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. Now, it has arrived in France at the Musée départemental Arles antique (MDAA).

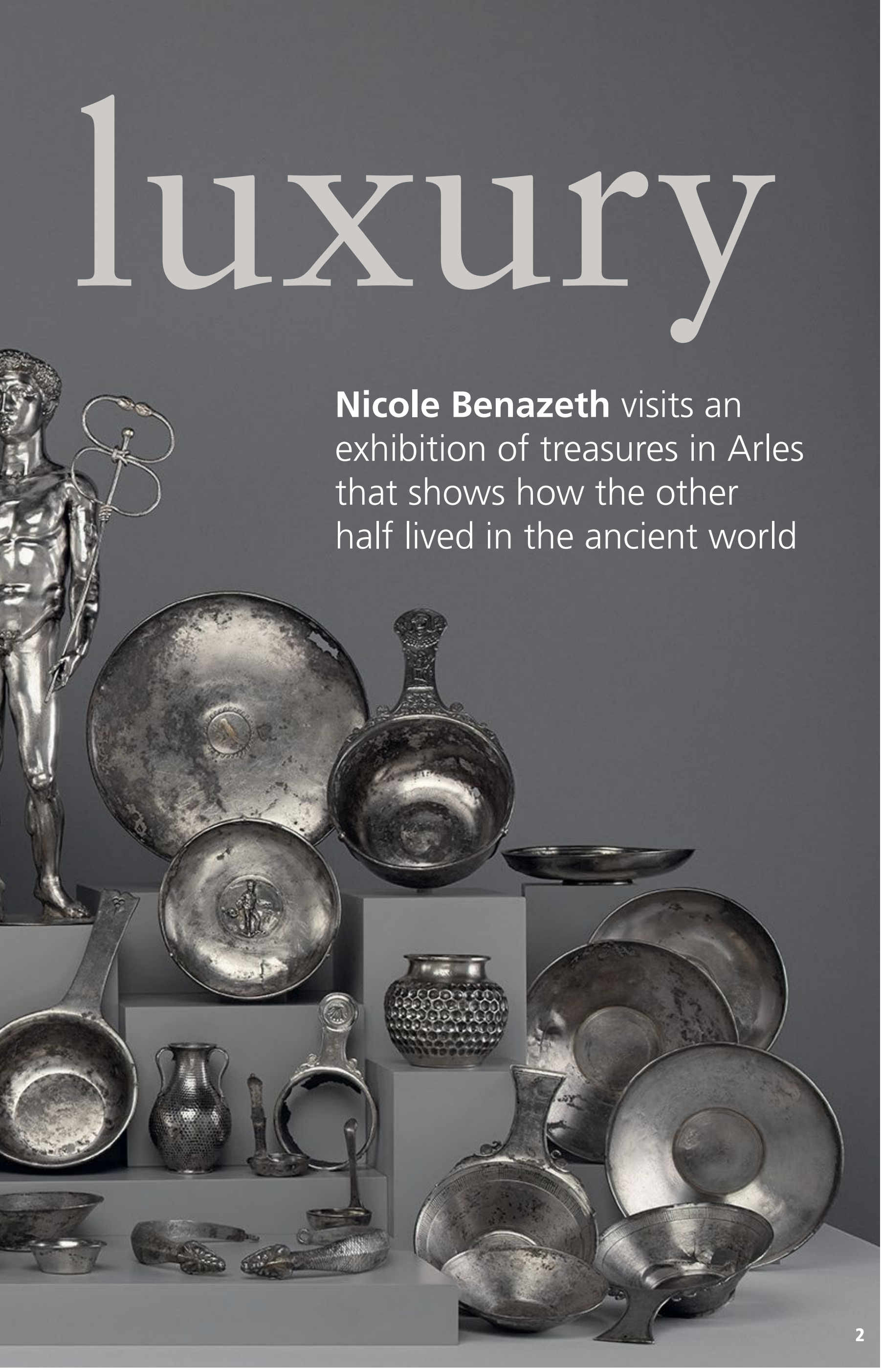
Most of the objects on show date from the first and second centuries of the Roman Empire. These include a group known as the Berthouville Treasure, which is displayed alongside a selection of precious gemstones, glass, jewellery and other luxury items from the royal collections of the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). This exhibition also gives an opportunity for the museum in Arles to shine a spotlight on examples of Roman luxury from its own collections that have been excavated locally.

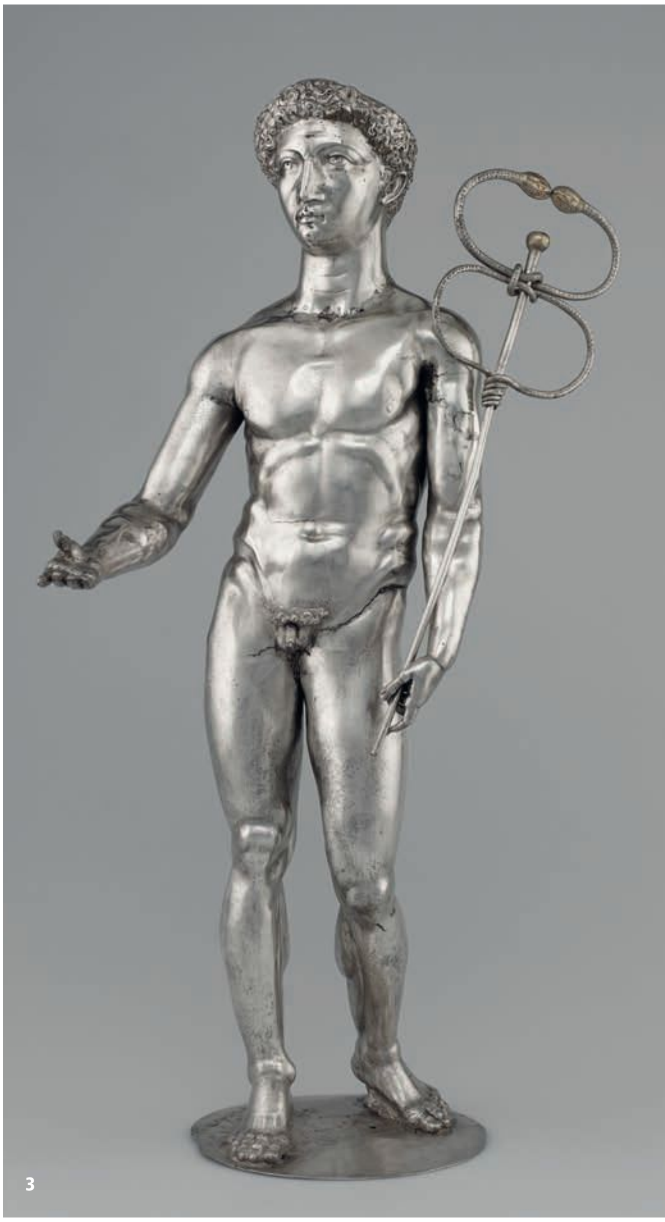
In 2010, the Berthouville Treasure and some other contemporary items belonging to the BnF collection were sent to the J Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles to undergo conservation treatment and be studied by a team of researchers led by Kenneth Lapatin, Associate Curator of Antiquities at the museum. After four years of meticulous work they were exhibited in LA before going on their 'world tour'.

This spectacular hoard of Roman silver and silver-gilt objects was found by chance by the aptly named Prosper Taurin, a French

luxury

Nicole Benazeth visits an exhibition of treasures in Arles that shows how the other half lived in the ancient world





farmer, ploughing his field near Berthouville in Normandy, on 2 March 1830. Around 93 pieces (128 including detached handles and appliqués) were unearthed and the total weighed 25kg. The trove included two statuettes of the god Mercury, a bust of goddess Maia and 60 vessels – bowls, cups, pitchers and plates decorated with mythological scenes – many of which bear votive inscriptions dedicated to Mercury Canetonensis. Excavations carried out near the find spot between 1861 and 1862 revealed vestiges of a shrine to Mercury of Canetonum, the name of the land of the local Lexovii.

Most of the artefacts are dated from the 2nd century AD, but nine of the most exquisite pieces, dedicated by a Roman citizen named Quintus Domitius Tutus, were made in the previous century. Some objects are in Gallo-Roman style, others come from an Italian-Greek workshop, but all are shining examples of Roman craftsmanship.

1. Intaglio of the Goddess Roma, onyx nicolo, *circa* AD 330. 6.1cm x 4.3cm. © Serge Oboukhoff BnF-CNRS-Maison Archéologie & Ethnologie, René-Ginouvès.

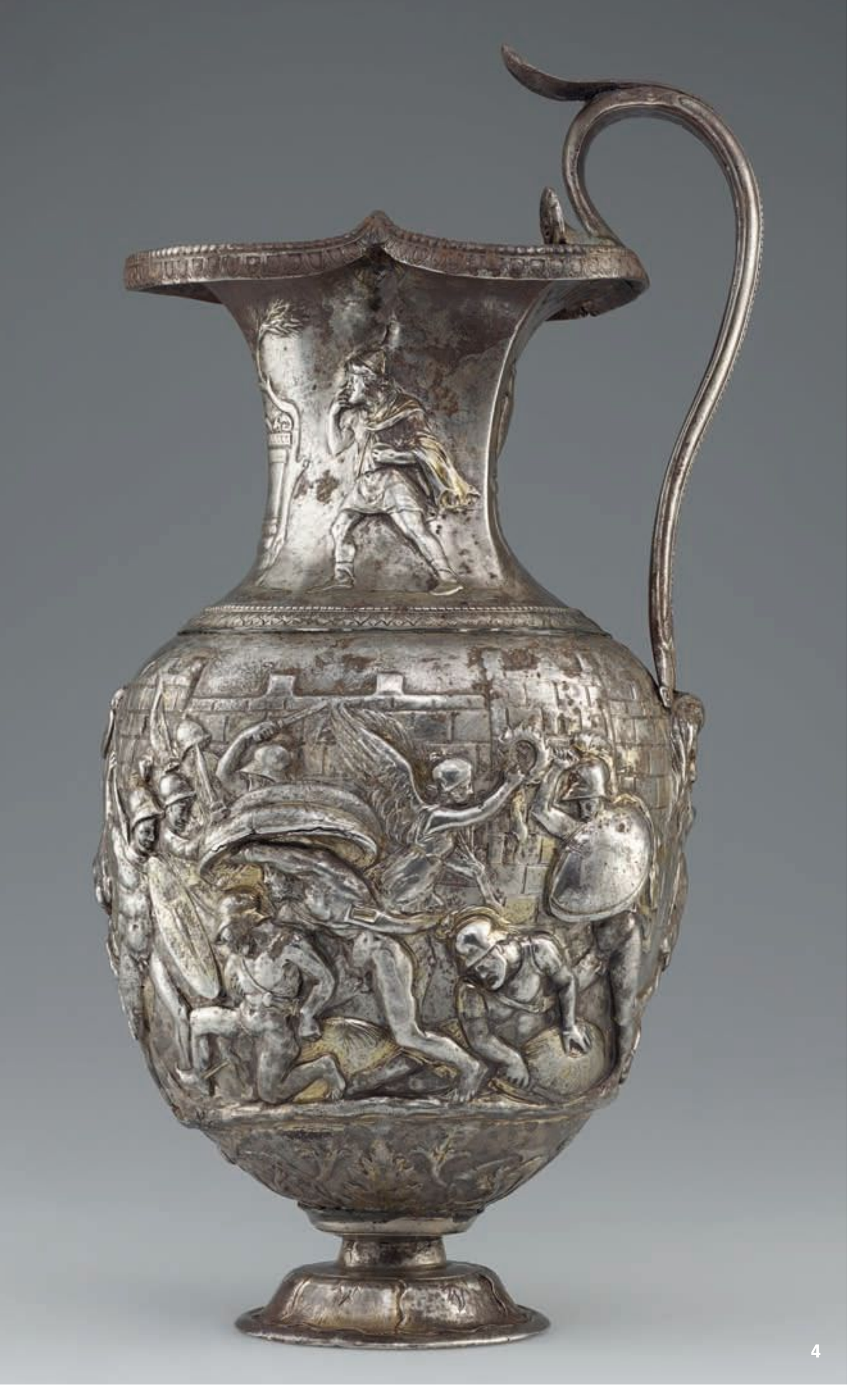
2. The Berthouville Treasure, silver and silver-gilt, 1st and 2nd century AD.

3. Statue of Mercury holding a cadduceus, silver and gold, AD 175–225. 63.6cm x 16cm.

The exhibition, which is spread over three areas in the museum, illustrates how and why Roman elites surrounded themselves with luxury artefacts. As today, they were used to demonstrate their wealth and power, most notably at banquets, the central element of social life, but they were also tokens of piety offered to deities in temples.

The temporary exhibition-hall of MDAA houses the masterpieces on loan from the BnF, including 90 objects from the Berthouville Treasure. By way of introduction, there is an evocation of the King of France's Cabinet Collection through one of its masterpieces: the Cameo of Chartres, or Cameo of Jupiter, made in Rome between AD 41 and 45. Carved in a piece of multilayered sardonyx, the cameo is remarkable because of the exquisite use of its three colours: brown, blue and red. It was donated to the cathedral of Chartres by Charles V in 1367 to adorn the reliquary containing the Sancta Camisa, the tunic said to have been worn by the Virgin at the birth of Christ. During the French Revolution, the reliquary was destroyed and the cameo was removed and included in the collection of what had become the Cabinet des Médailles. The 14th-century gold mounting set with pearls and rubies was replaced by silver-gilt fleurs de lys and dolphins.

The first section of the exhibition focuses on gold as a sign of social status, wealth and power. Alongside Roman coins is the spectacular Patera of Rennes, one of the few surviving examples of Roman gold tableware. Discovered in 1774, this early 3rd-century, shallow libation



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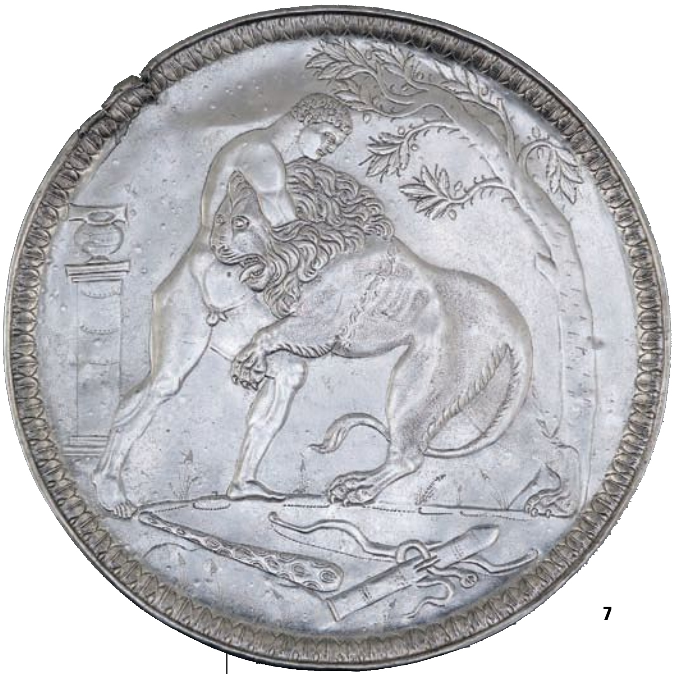

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4. ***Oenochoe (wine jug)*** **showing a scene from the Trojan War, silver, 1st century AD. 28.8cm x 12cm.**

5. Silver phiale, or ***patera*****, depicting Omphale, Queen of Lydia, 1st century AD. 8cm x 28.9cm.**

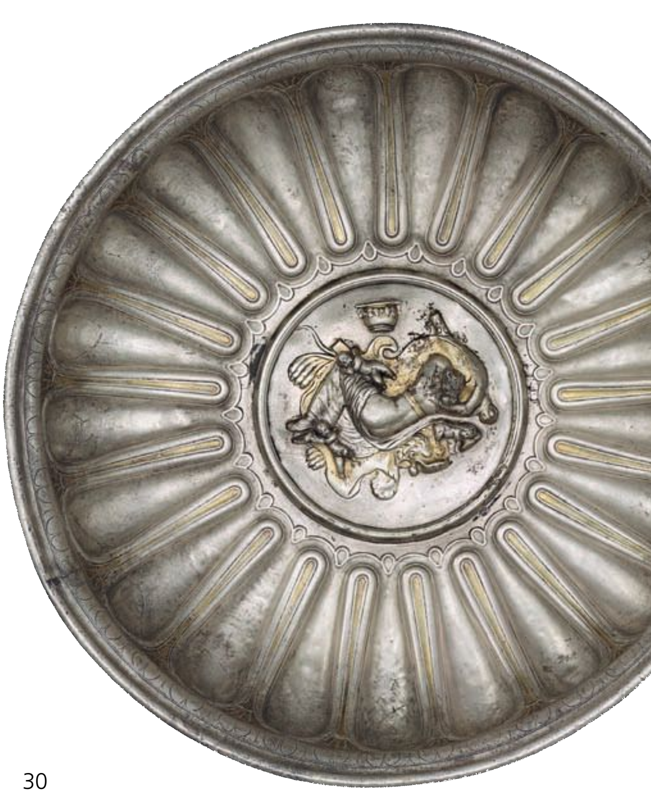
6. Bacchic ***kantharos*****, or drinking cup, silver,** ***circa*** **AD 50. 15.8cm x 13.3cm.**

7. ***Missorium*** **showing Heracles fighting the Nemean Lion, silver, 6th century AD.**

bowl has a repoussé decoration with gold coins from the Antonine and Severan dynasties inserted around its inner edge.

Wearing luxury is the second theme, illustrated by jewellery made of gold and gemstones, intaglios and cameos with imperial imagery. Wealth was also shown by clothing, hairstyles and perfumes contained in precious bottles such as some rare glass cameo-vases. The same elites also displayed their wealth and power in their homes, with precious materials, highly refined decors – bronze and marble sculptures, mosaics and murals – intended both for their own pleasure and to impress their guests at banquets.

Among the rare examples of luxury tableware used in antiquity are four *missoria*, large ceremonial dishes. The most outstanding is the Shield of Scipio, a 4th-century silver-and-gold plate depicting the Homeric hero Achilles, found by a fisherman in the Rhône River in



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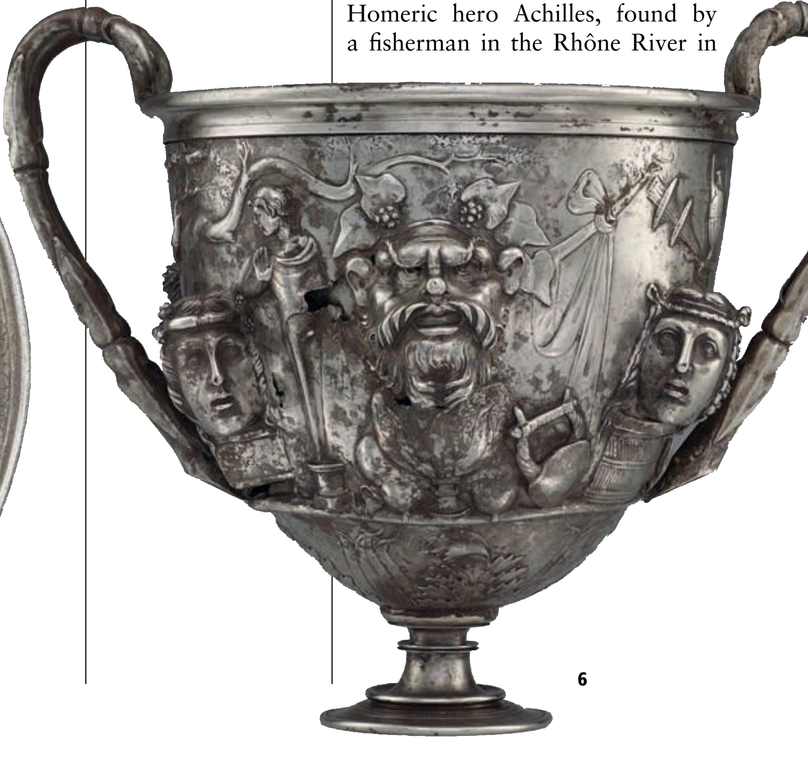

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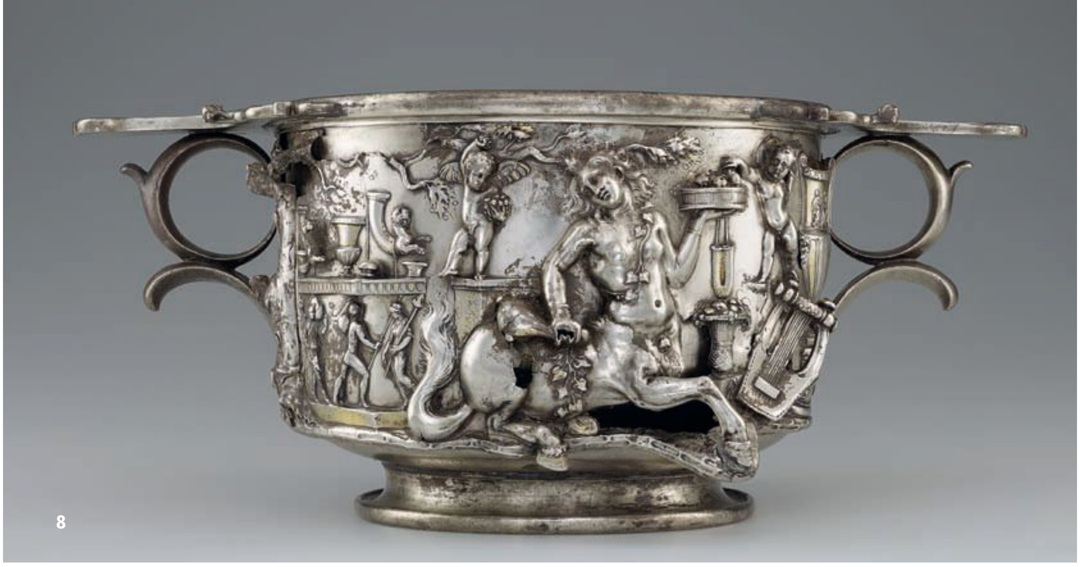


1656. The three silver *missoria* are the Shield of Hannibal (4th or 5th century), Geilamir (6th century), and Heracles fighting the Nemean Lion (6th century).

The Berthouville Treasure is the centrepiece of the exhibition. This unique example of votive treasure is all the more valuable since many tons of Roman silver were melted down in subsequent centuries. The place where it was found, according to the Getty Museum's Kenneth Lapatin, '*seems to have been a vault for a sanctuary that would have been used once or twice a year, when goodies were brought out and displayed, then hidden away*'.

Further excavation of the Normandy site, carried out between 1862 and 1896, provided evidence of a large enclosure of buildings unlike typical Greek or Roman temples. Recent ground-penetrating electrical resistivity imaging has revealed that the treasure had been stashed in an outside colonnade. Researchers at the J Paul Getty museum discovered inscriptions on votive artefacts that identified who, apart from Quintus Domitius Tutus, contributed to the hoard.

8. *Skyphos* wine cup decorated with centaurs, silver-gilt, *circa* AD 50. H. 11.6cm. W. 15 cm.

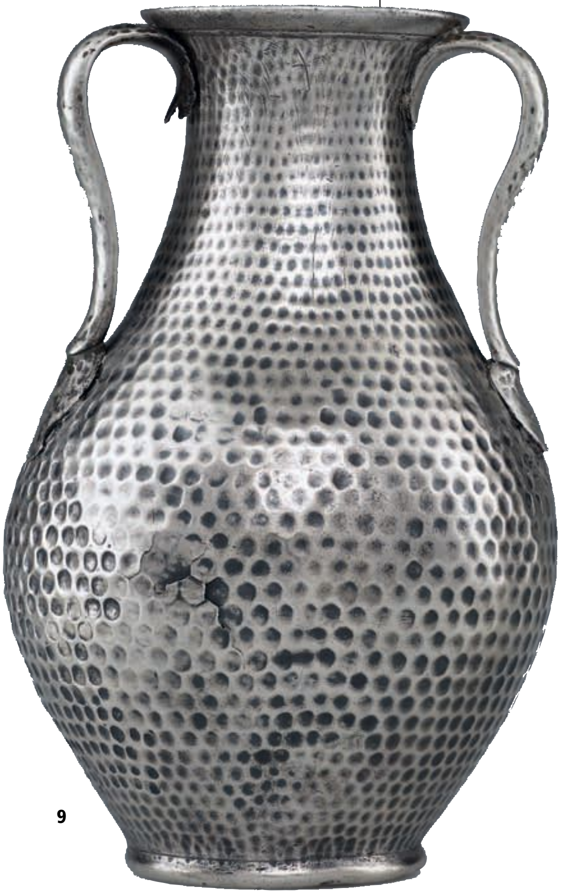
9. Flask, Gallo-Roman, late 2nd century–early 3rd century AD, silver. H.12cm.

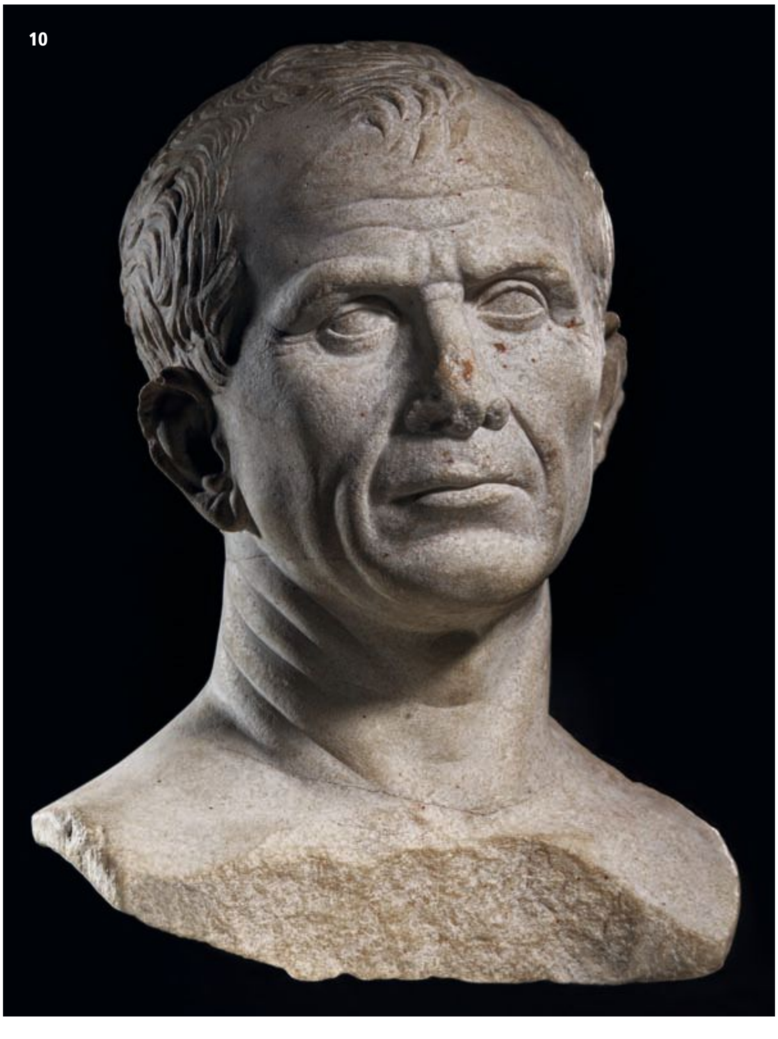
10 Life-sized marble bust, believed to be a portrait of Julius Caesar, 1st century BC. © Musée Arles antique.

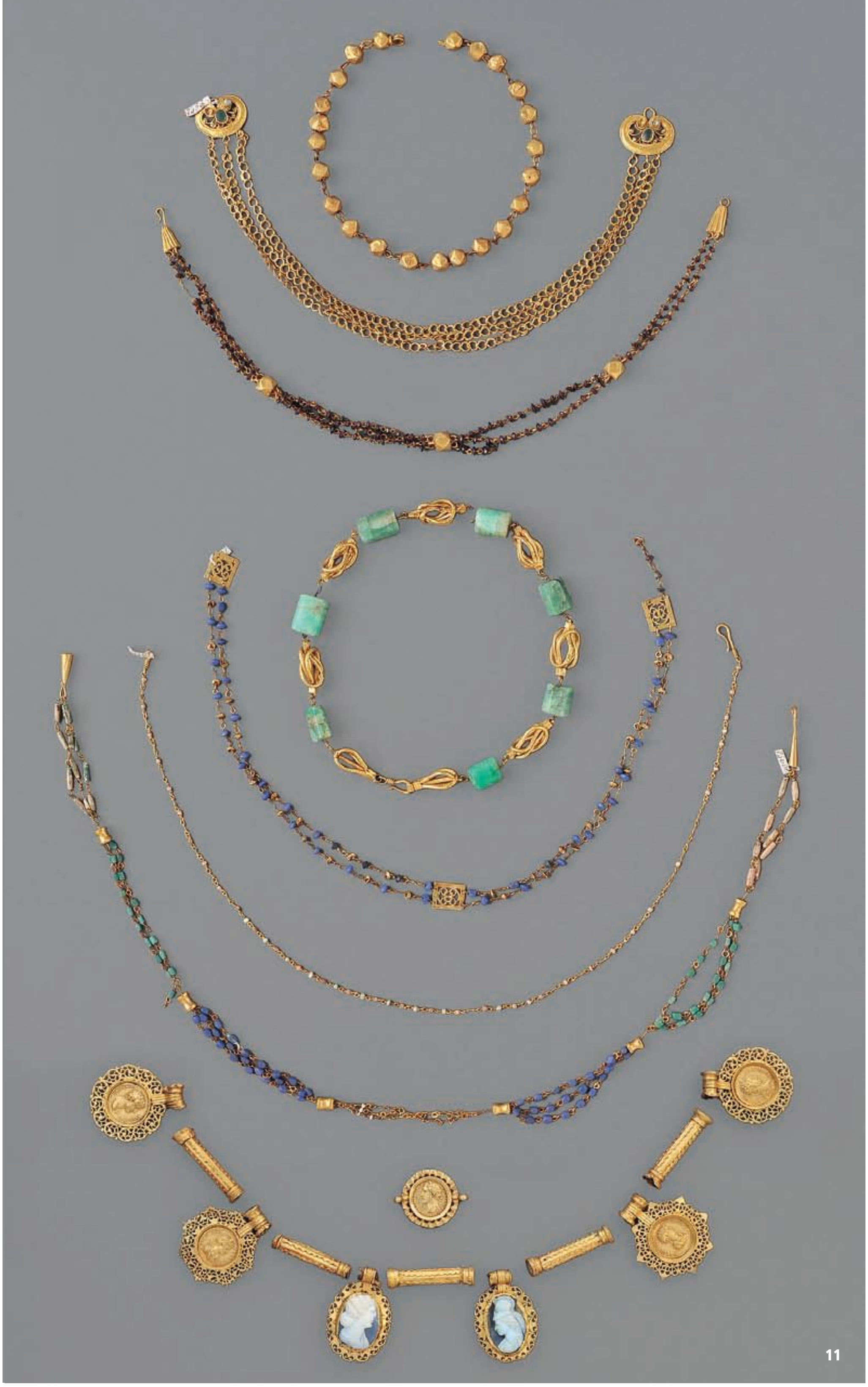
As Lapatin explains: '*Other donors also had Latin names, but some were clearly locals like* Germanissa *(the German woman), the daughter of Viscarius. So we know that there were Romans as well as locals, women as well as men, even freed slaves as well as the free born who worshipped Mercury. We have no other record about Tutus, and we really don't know much about his taste. We do know that he came into possession of some exquisite silver, and he was quite generous about giving it to Mercury, but we don't know much about his motivation, except what we are told by the inscriptions, which say he made his dedications* ex voto *(in fulfilment of a vow).*

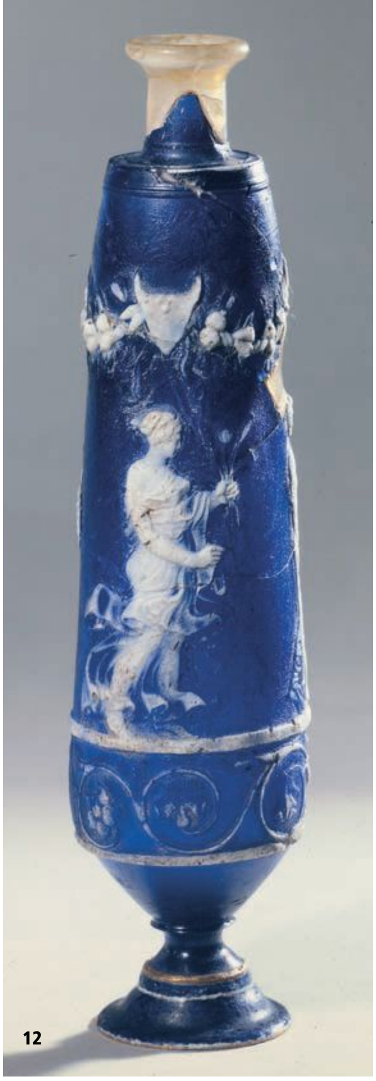
'So if this is what they had in remote Gaul, what have we lost from the tables of senators and emperors in Rome? In fact, some of the pieces found at Berthouville represent the best of surviving Roman silver; better than anything we have from Pompeii, Herculaneum or anywhere else.'

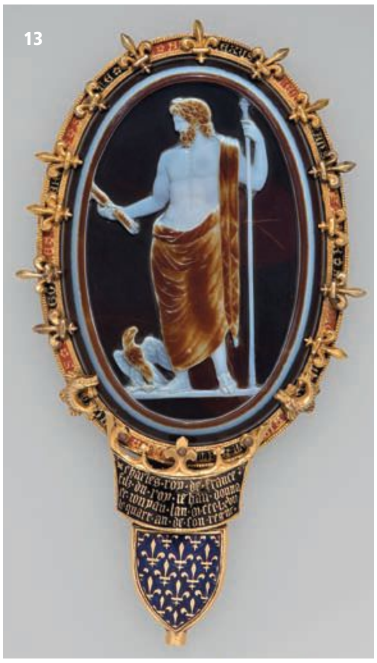
As for the deities to whom the offerings were dedicated, Getty researchers suggest that they were Romanised versions of Gallic deities, although during one of his campaigns in the 1st century BC, Julius Caesar identified Mercury as a major deity in Gaul. Apart from the two statuettes representing Mercury, four bowls are decorated with designs relating to the same god. The silver bust of goddess Maia is, in fact, detached from the











11. Eight necklaces in gold, glass, emerald, amethyst, beads, onyx, agate, 3rd century AD.

12. The 'Seasons' *alabastron*, or perfume-holder, blue and white glass, 25 BC–AD 25. 15.5cm x 3.2cm.

13 Cameo of Chartres, or Cameo of Jupiter, multi-layered sardonyx, AD 41–45. 15.2cm x 6.5cm.

medallion of a libation bowl. In Greek mythology, Maia was one of the Pleiades, daughter of Atlas and mother of Hermes, and in Roman mythology, she is the mother of Mercury (whose father is Jupiter). A number of items found in Gallo-Roman religious sites represent both Mercury and Maia.

The exhibition extends to the part of the museum devoted to its permanent collection where treasures found in ancient Arles (Arelate) are presented in 10 thematic displays. Most were discovered during a number of underwater excavation campaigns carried out in the Rhône. Arelate was a busy port, trading with the entire Mediterranean region, and a gateway to inland Gaul, both by land and the navigable river. One of the most striking pieces is a life-sized marble bust found in 2007. This highly realistic representation of a mature man is in the tradition of Roman Republican portraiture.

At the time of its discovery, archaeologists suggested that it could be the oldest known portrait of Julius Caesar and dated it to 46 BC. But the identification was soon disputed, because of the lack of resemblance to the Tusculum bust, which is regarded as a depiction of Caesar in his lifetime, and to portraits on coins. Controversy is still ongoing among specialists. But even if it is 'only' an unidentified portrait from the Augustan period, as some suggest, it is nonetheless a remarkable work of art to be found in a young Roman colony.

Other striking items also found in the Rhône in 2007 include two bronzes of excellent craftsmanship, dated from the last quarter of the 1st

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century BC, a statuette of a Captive Gaul and a gilt-bronze appliqué of a Victory.

Illustrating the theme of luxury and burial is the sarcophagus depicting scenes of Phaedra and Hippolytus. It is the only example of its kind in France, exceptional not only because of its artistic quality but also because of its Attic origin. The production of sarcophagi in Attica was known from the 2nd century, but these were usually destined for the Eastern Mediterranean area. They were shipped unfinished and personalised with the deceased's features in situ. This one is a box decorated with the story of Hippolytus, son of Theseus, the king of Athens, and of Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons. The lid is in the shape of a bed on which the figure reclines. A second figure was removed and the remaining feminine figure was transformed into a man.

Luxury in the home meant furnishing a villa with mosaics. The Annus-Aiôn mosaic, dated from the end of the 2nd century AD, comes from a dining-room (*triclinium*) in Verrerie in Trinquetaille, the Roman site opposite Arles on the left bank of the river. In the centre, Aiôn, the deity of time, is surrounded by Cupids symbolising the seasons, and by four couples of Tritons and Nereids. The main scene is framed on three sides by a broad geometric composition. On the fourth side, which was at the entrance of the dining-room, is represented the inebriated Dionysos.

14. ***Patera of Rennes*, gold, early 3rd century AD. D. 25cm.**

15. Gold bracelet, 4th century AD. 4.7cm x 8.1cm.

16. Double-portrait gold ring with inset carnelian intaglio, Syria, end of 1st century BC. 1.4cm x 1.9cm.

17. Intaglio portrait of Emperor Commodus, amethyst and gold, *circa* AD 192. 3cm x 2.3cm.

18. Ring, gold with pearls and emerald, Syria, *circa* AD 400.

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A life-size Greek marble statue of Neptune, also found in the Rhône, illustrates the theme of luxury in cults. It dates to the second half of the 2nd century AD and was reused in the third century, as shown by an inscription in tribute to a guild of boatmen, the *lenunclarii*. The god, standing on a pedestal, was originally holding a trident in his left hand. At his feet is a sea monster and, at the back of the pedestal, a Cupid riding a dolphin. Tableware, coins and jewellery complement this panorama of luxury in ancient Arelate.

The third and final section, in the upper floor exhibition area, shows the preventive excavation work carried out in the Verrerie neighbourhood where archaeological work has been going on since the 1980s. Fragments of rare Roman frescoes were discovered in a rich 1st-century BC Roman *domus*. They were part of a decor in Second Pompeian style, which appeared in Gaul in 70–20 BC. The *trompe-l'oeil* panels and exquisitely painted figures reveal excellent artistry, probably made by artists brought from Italy and using expensive pigments.

These frescoes can be compared to those found in Cubiculum 4 of the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii and the Villa of P Fannius Synistor in Boscoreale, destroyed in the eruption of Vesuvius. They provide further illustrations of the love of luxury in the Roman colony of Arelate.

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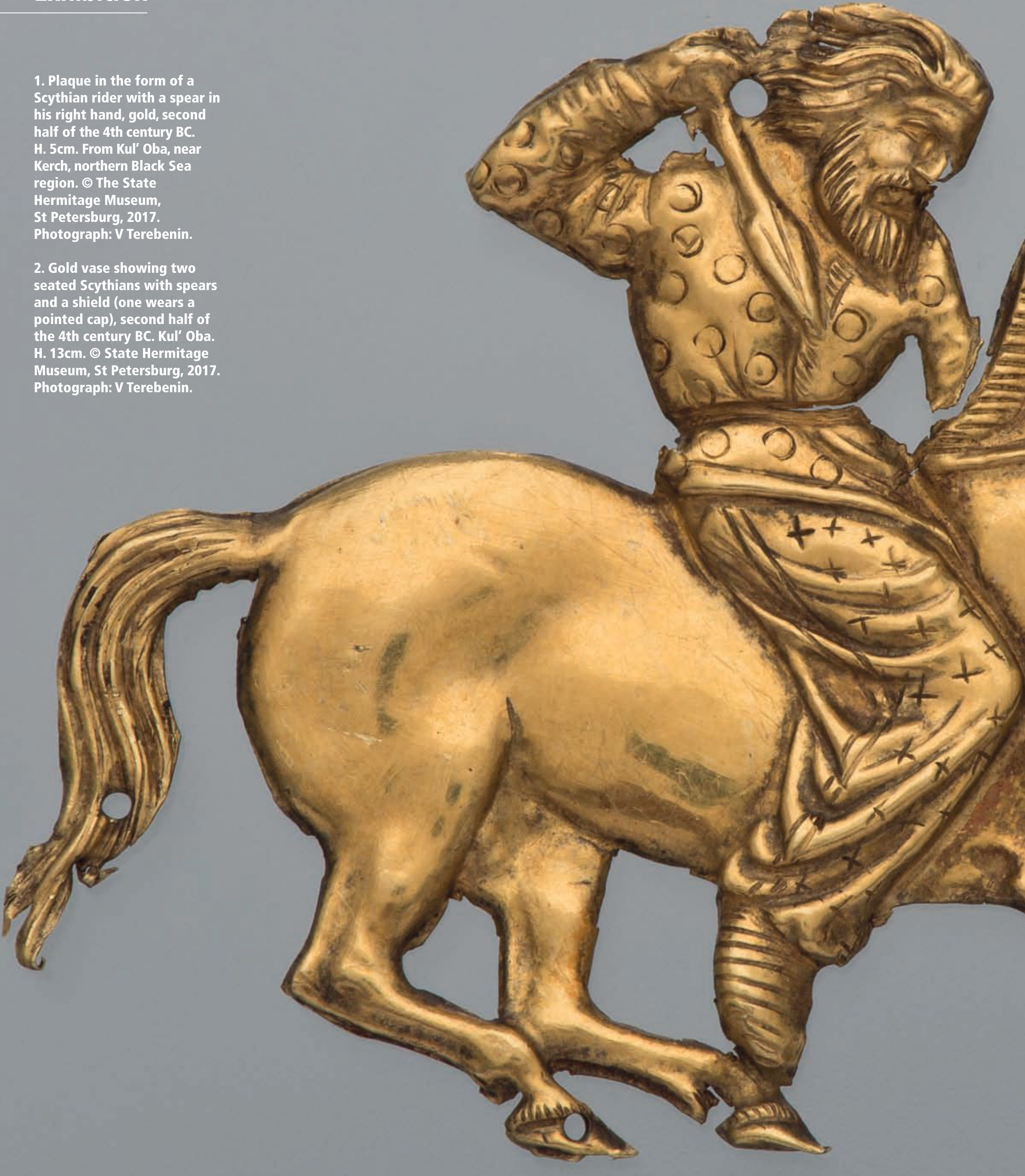
When admiring the Berthouville Treasure, another collection comes to mind: the Karun Treasure (also known as Croesus Treasure), a collection of 363 valuable Lydian artefacts from the 7th century BC, illegally excavated in 1966 from a tomb chamber of a local princess in Turkey. Will more of these hordes of ancient luxuries be discovered in years to come? Only time will tell. ■

• *Luxury in Antiquity* is on show at the Musée départemental Arles antique in Arles (www.arles-antique.cg13.fr) from 1 July 2017 to 21 January 2018.

1. Plaque in the form of a Scythian rider with a spear in his right hand, gold, second half of the 4th century BC. H. 5cm. From Kul' Oba, near Kerch, northern Black Sea region. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph: V Terebenin.

2. Gold vase showing two seated Scythians with spears and a shield (one wears a pointed cap), second half of the 4th century BC. Kul' Oba. H. 13cm. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph: V Terebenin.



The galloping

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Everyone has heard of the Scythians but where did they come from, how did they live and what was it that helped them to rise to power? **St John Simpson**, curator of a revealing new exhibition at the British Museum, gives us the answers

goldsmiths

3. Southern Siberian landscape with *kurgans*, or Scythian burial mounds. Photograph © V Terebenin.

4. Scythian horseman by DV Pozdnjakov, watercolour, date??. The clothing is based on excavated finds from Olon-Kurin-Gol 10, Altai mountains, Mongolia. Institute for Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

5. Map of Eurasia *circa* 5th-4th centuries BC, by Paul Goodhead with the Achaemenid Empire (in red) and the Eurasian steppe and mixed woodland largely occupied by Scythians (in green).

The Scythians were horse-rearing nomads who flourished between the 9th and 2nd centuries BC and dominated a vast swathe of fertile grassy steppe from the edge of China across Kazakhstan and southern Russia and as far west as the northern Black Sea. They raided through the mountain passes of the Caucasus into large areas of the Middle East in the 7th century BC.

Late Assyrian histories tell us that they threatened the northern borders of Assyria but how, in 676 BC, their king Esarhaddon (r 680–669 BC) '*put to the sword Ishpaka, a Scythian, an ally who could not save himself*'.

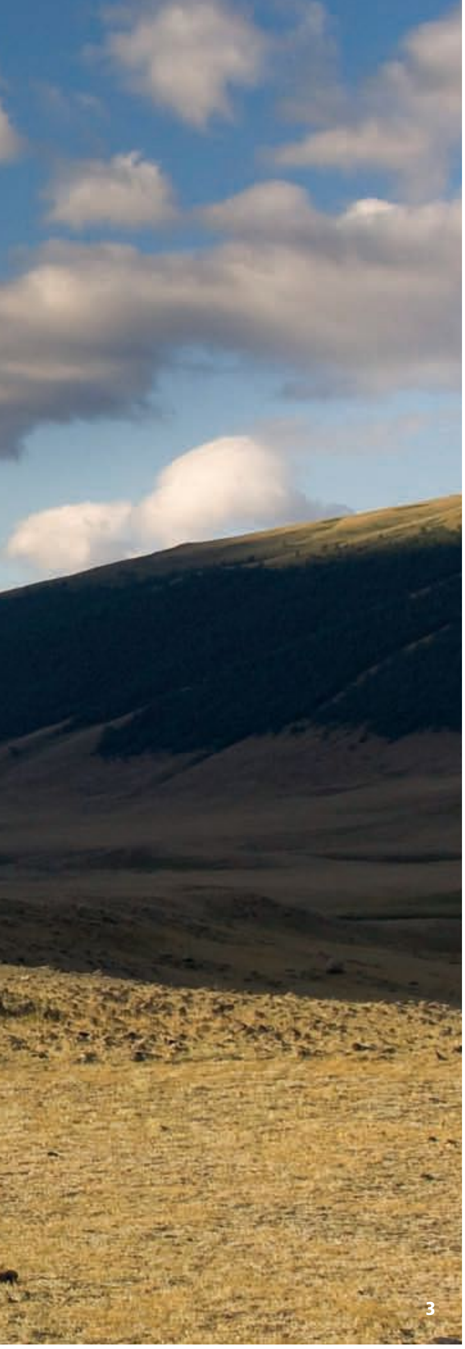
Then, in 519 BC, the Achaemenid ruler Darius I (r 522–486 BC) relates how he crushed internal opposition to his accession and campaigned against the '*Pointed Hat Scythians*', killing one of their chiefs and leading another called Skunkha into captivity. Skunkha, who is shown on Darius' rock-cut relief at Bisitun, which overlooks a major pass connecting western Iran with Mesopotamia, wears trousers, jacket and a tall conical hat.

Other Achaemenid reliefs and sculptures show Scythian men (some wearing conical hats) in their typical dress of belted trousers and long-sleeved gowns, carrying pointed battle-axes and short swords, and bringing horses.

Persian sources distinguish between three types of Scythian, whom they called *Sakā*. First, there are the *Sakā haumavargā* or '*haoma*-drinking *Sakā*' (the juice from a sacred plant, the *haoma*), who may be the same as the 'Amyrgian Scythians', referred to by the 5th-century BC Greek writer Herodotus, who devoted almost an entire Book in his *Histories* to describing their customs. Next come the *Sakā tigraxaudā* ('*Sakā* with pointed caps'), and, finally, the seemingly western *Sakā tayai paradraya* ('*Sakā* beyond the sea').

The recorded personal names show that they were Iranian speakers but the Scythians have left no written testimonies of their own and, being nomads, have left few remains other than their tombs – and it is these that have yielded vast amounts of information about them.

As early as the beginning of the 18th century it was realised that some of these tombs contained valuable objects, and gangs of explorers set out each year from newly founded Russian towns, such as Tobolsk, in search of gold. Some of the first finds made their way into the collection of a Dutchman called Nicolaas Witsen and inspired Peter the Great, the Tsar of Russia, to build his own collection. Witsen's finds are now lost but Peter the Great's collection grew to include as many as 240 gold objects and became known as his Siberian Collection. Official decrees were



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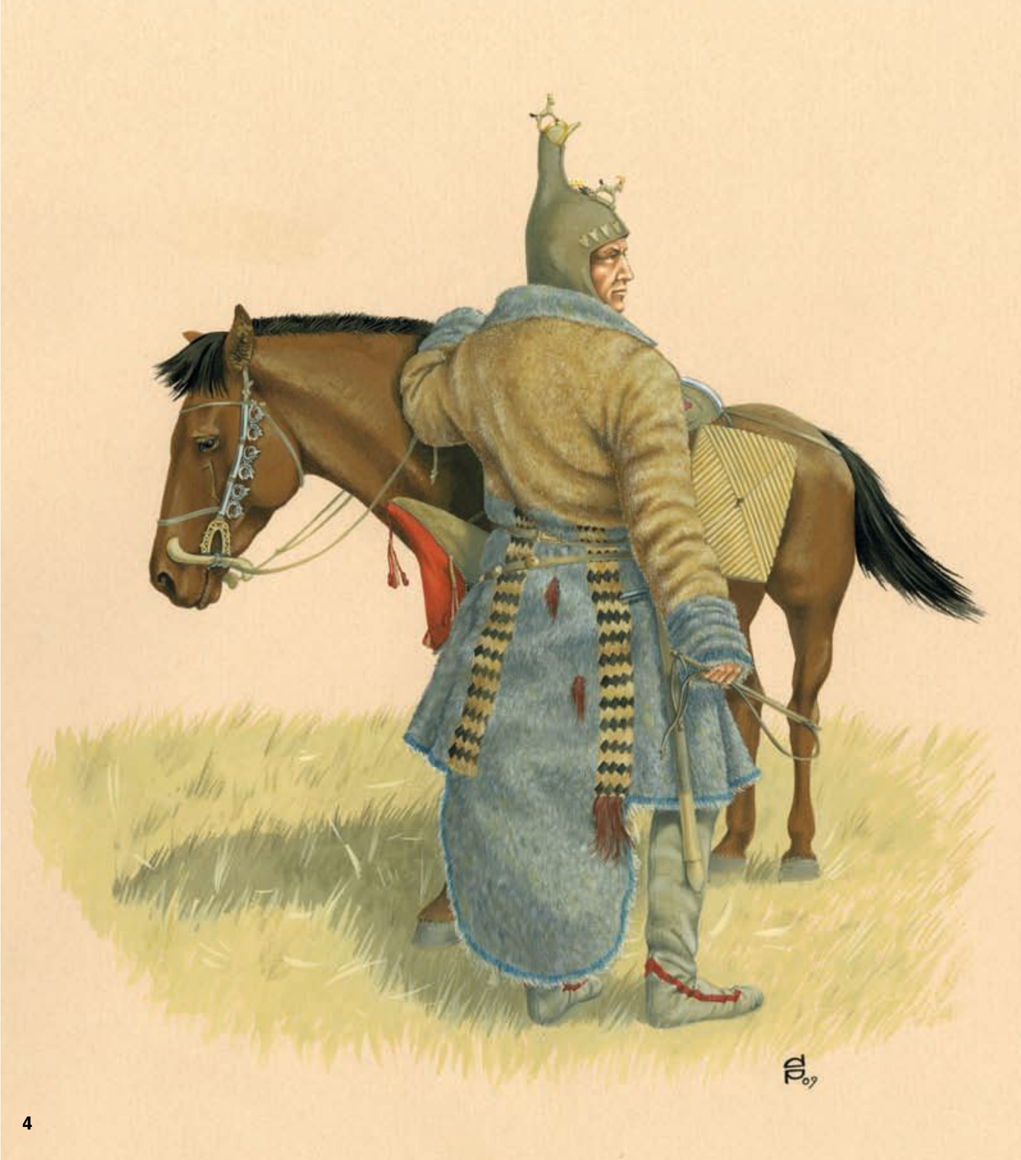

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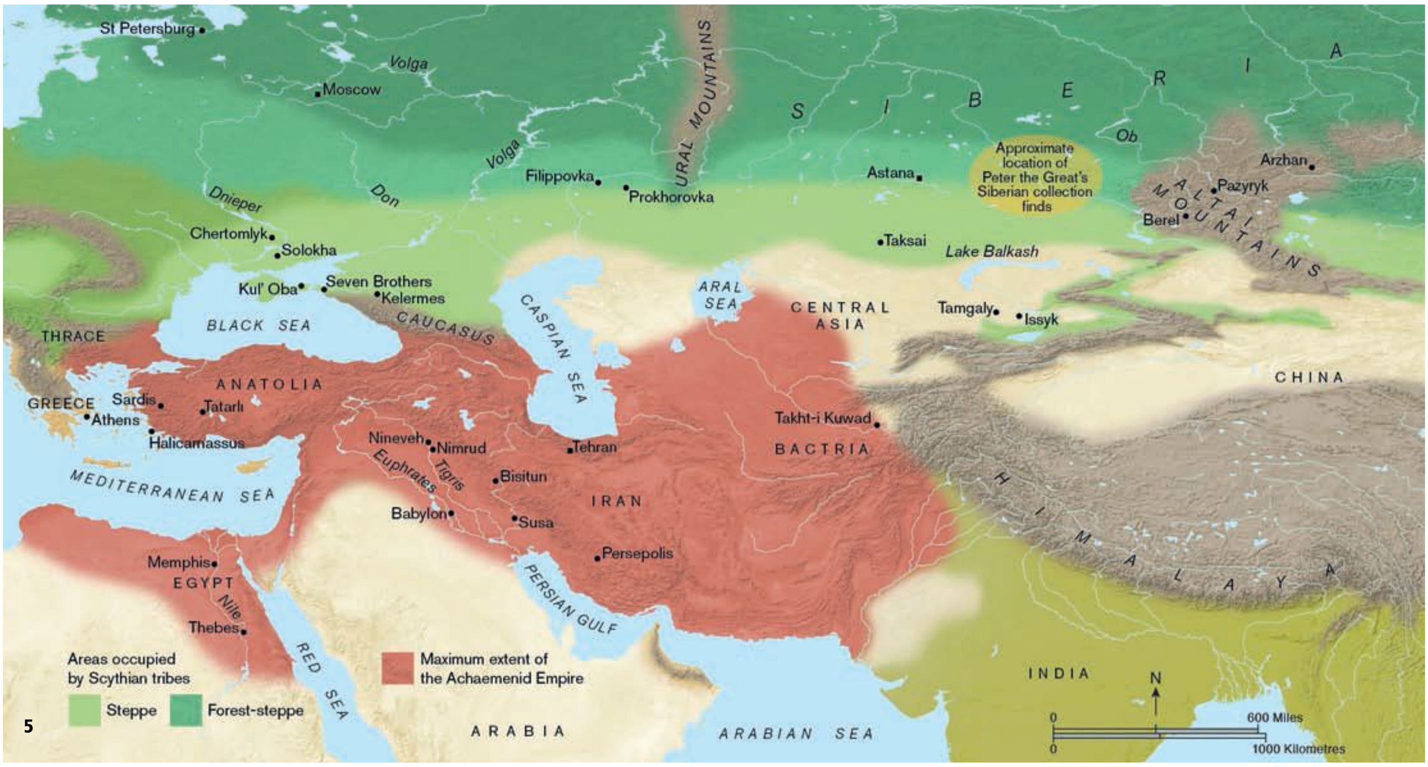
St Petersburg
Volga
Moscow
URAL MOUNTAINS
SIBERIA
Ob
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Filippovka
Prokhorovka
Astana
Approximate location of Peter the Great's Siberian collection finds
Arzhan
Pazyryk
ALTAI MOUNTAINS
Berel
Dnieper
Don
Chertomlyk
Solokha
Taksai
Lake Balkash
Kul' Oba
Seven Brothers
Kelermes
ARAL SEA
CENTRAL ASIA
Tamgaly
Issyk
BLACK SEA
CAUCASUS
CASPIAN SEA
THRACE
ANATOLIA
CHINA
GREECE
Sardis
Tatarlı
Athens
Takht-i Kuwad
Halicarnassus
Nineveh
Nimrud
Tehran
BACTRIA
Euphrates
Tigris
Bisitun
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
HIMALAYA
IRAN
Babylon
Susa
Persepolis
Memphis
EGYPT
Nile
Thebes
PERSIAN GULF
RED SEA
Areas occupied by Scythian tribes
Steppe
Forest-steppe
Maximum extent of the Achaemenid Empire
INDIA
N
ARABIA
ARABIAN SEA
0
600 Miles
0
1000 Kilometres

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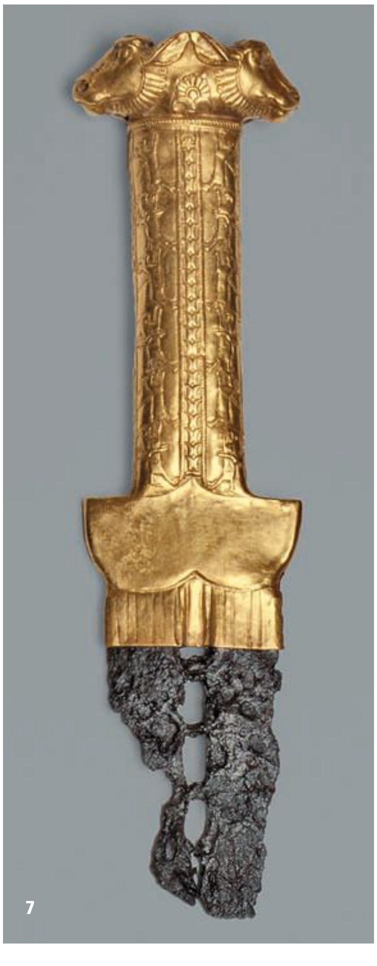
6. Southern Siberian landscape with a *kurgan* or Scythian burial mound. Photograph © V Terebenin.



7. Iron short sword with decorated gold hilt, terminating in two calves' heads, third quarter of the 4th century BC. H. 14.9cm. Chertomlyk, Dnieper region, northern Black Sea region. State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Photograph © V Terebenin.

8. A pair of gold appliqué plaques showing two archers, back to back, 400–350 BC. H. 3.1cm. Kul Oba. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

passed stating that precious objects were state property: '*The ancient gold and silver things, which are found in the earth of ancient tombs, people of any office are to declare and present in Tobolsk, and those things to be taken from them for the Treasury of the Great Tsar, and money to be given out from the Treasury for the things taken.*'

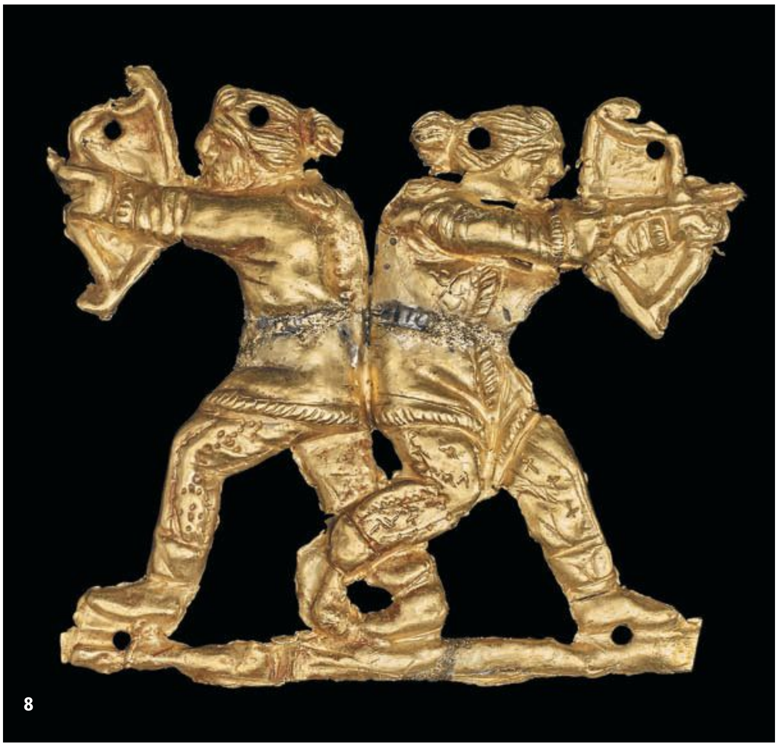
The parcels of antiquities sent to Peter the Great's new capital, St Petersburg, were the earliest antiquities exacavated in Russian territory and excited surprise that such sophisticated goldwork could have been made in a region considered as backward as Siberia.

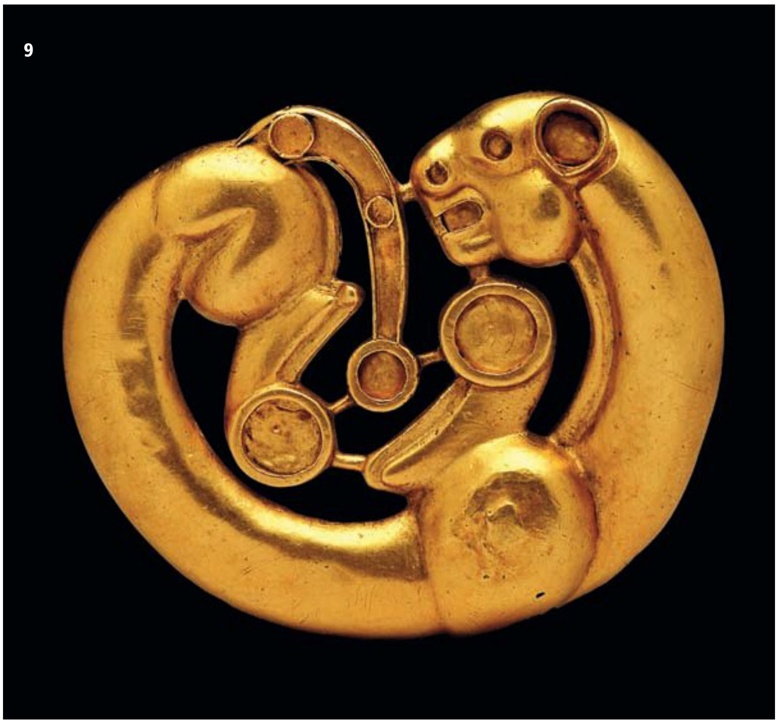
The Tsar commissioned several scientific expeditions to the region and forbade further looting. His foundation of a new building known as the *Kunstkamera*, or 'cabinet of curiosities', followed the model of other 18th-century rulers in the Age of Enlightenment and it represents the first museum in Russia, founded in 1714, 40 years before the British Museum came into being.

During the 19th century these and other antiquities were transferred across the mighty River Neva to the Hermitage Museum, once the Winter Palace of Catherine II, and now a museum. During this period numerous burial mounds, from southern Siberia to the northern Black Sea and northern Caucasus, were explored, and a heated debate ignited over the extent to which these represented local cultures, Scythian tribes or the Slav forerunners of modern Russians. To some extent, this discussion continues today.

As 2017 is the centennial year of the Russian Revolution, the British Museum has chosen to mark it with the latest BP exhibition, *Scythians: Warriors of Ancient Siberia*. It draws heavily on the collections of the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg but also borrows important objects, found in famous past and very recent excavations in Kazakhstan, which are held in the new National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Astana. This exhibition provides a unique opportunity to exhibit these finds, together with others from Scythian burial mounds at the northern Black Sea site of Nymphaeum, normally displayed in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

The exhibition begins with a group of stunning gold objects





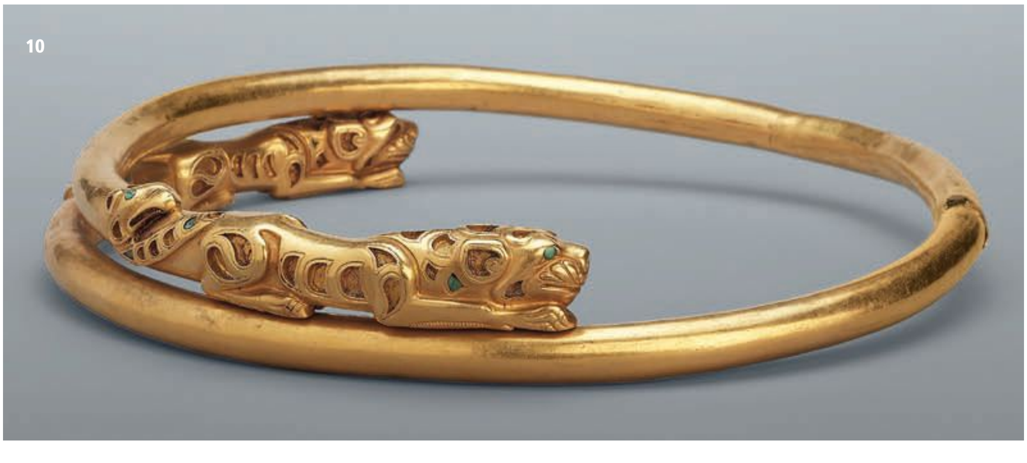
from the Siberian Collection of Peter the Great, juxtaposed with lifesize watercolour drawings of the same objects executed by Russian draftsmen during the 1730s.

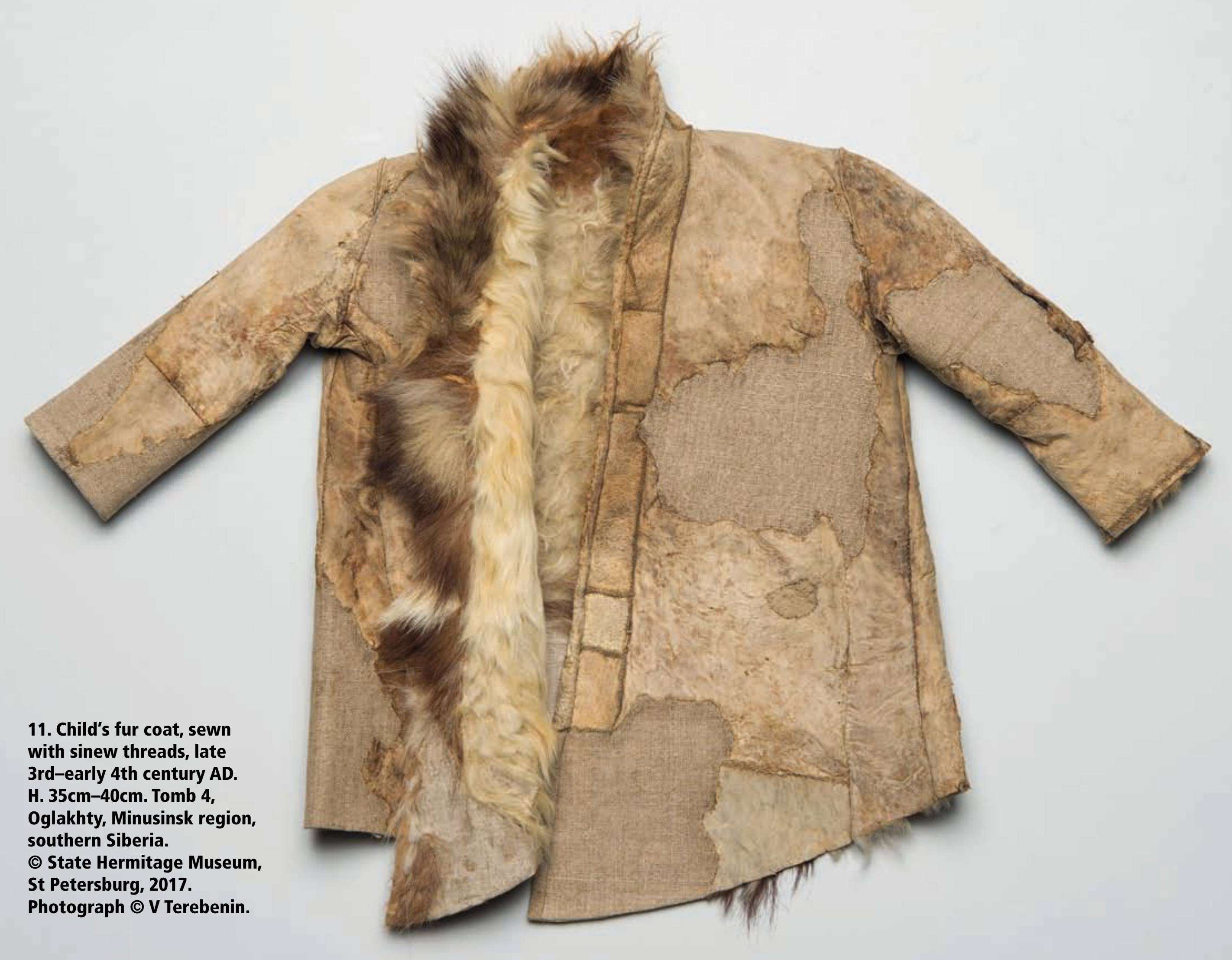
The extraordinary beauty and skill of the anonymous Scythian master craftsmen is clear but it is interesting to see how some of these artists struggled to capture and accurately interpret the details of the complex intertwined iconography of predators pouncing on animals. This fluid style, typical of the arts and crafts of the Scythians and their nomadic contemporaries, is known today as 'Animal Style Art'. It was omnipresent and is found on gold and bronze belt buckles, horse-gear and body art (tattoos).

Versions of these contest scenes mutated across cultures from China to Iran and Celtic Europe: understanding how, why and what this rich visual narrative means is fiendishly difficult but one thing is clear. The Scythians were at the geographical epicentre of this style and, because of their success in developing a highly mobile form of pastoral nomadism based on horse-breeding, they were able to share ideas over much wider areas

9. A coiled panther, gold, 4th–3rd century BC. H. 10.9cm. Siberian Collection of Peter the Great. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph: V Terebenin.

10. Belt ornament, gold with semi-precious stone inlay. Siberian Collection of Peter the Great. H. 12.3cm. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph: V Terebenin.



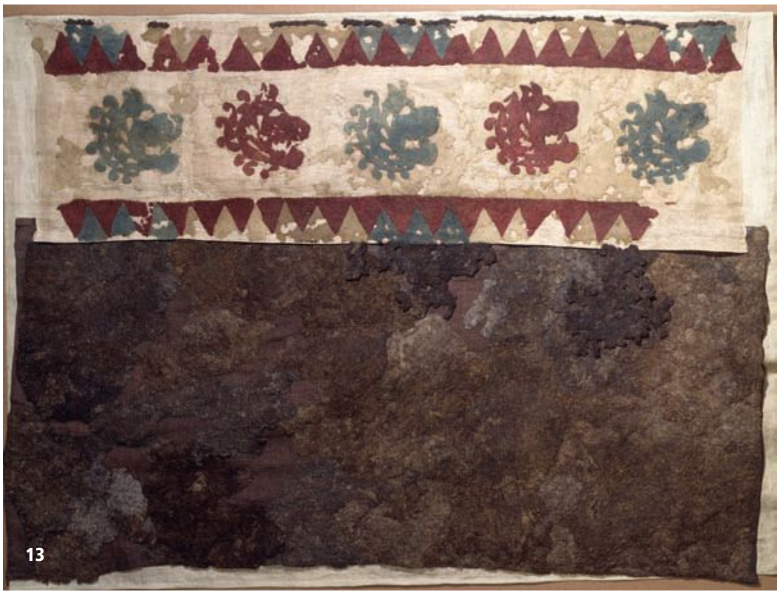


11. Child's fur coat, sewn with sinew threads, late 3rd–early 4th century AD. H. 35cm–40cm. Tomb 4, Oglakhty, Minusinsk region, southern Siberia. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph © V Terebenin.

at a quicker pace than ever before. Cultural interaction is a complex matter but in this case it involved influences entering and coming from China, the Near East and Greece across different media and in different political environments.

Exceptionally preserved grave-goods, either from unrobbed 'royal' mounds such as Arzhan-2 in the Tuva region or Issyk in Kazakhstan or permanently frozen tombs at Pazyryk and Berel 11, provide amazing insights into aspects of Scythian life. They clearly believed in a form of afterlife, so the dead were buried clothed and accompanied by food, drink, weapons, essential accessories and their favourite horses. In the case of wealthy chiefs the number of horses was large, and new genetic analyses show that the diversity of genes proves that these were from different herds and therefore were probably presents from different tribes. The lead horses wore elaborate horse-gear and saddles evidently designed to transform them into mythical creatures. Sable fur coats decorated with gold appliqués, decorated felt stockings and women's shoes with elaborate soles designed to impress the onlooker when seated cross-legged on the floor of a tent, survive from the same tombs at Pazyryk.

Other costumes were covered in miniature gold appliqués sewn onto the cloth. Tall headdresses were worn by these women and supported gold ornaments at the top. A chieftain from the same site died from wounds to the head and his own very elaborate wood and leather headgear bears the cut marks from his last hours. His body was preserved in the permafrost of his burial chamber and shows



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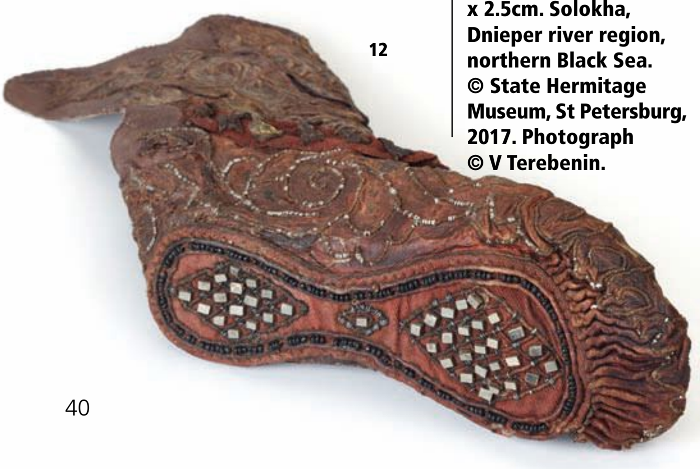

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12. Woman's shoe with fancy patterned sole. L. 34cm. Burial mound 2, Pazyryk, Altai Mountains, southern Siberia. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph © V Terebenin.

13. Felt rug with lion's head appliqués, late 4th–early 3rd century BC. H. 135cm. Burial mound 1, Pazyryk. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph © V Terebenin.

14. Clothing appliqués of Scythians sharing drinking horns, gold, 400–380 BC. 2.5cm x 2.5cm. Solokha, Dnieper river region, northern Black Sea. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph © V Terebenin.

that his upper torso and arms were heavily tattooed.

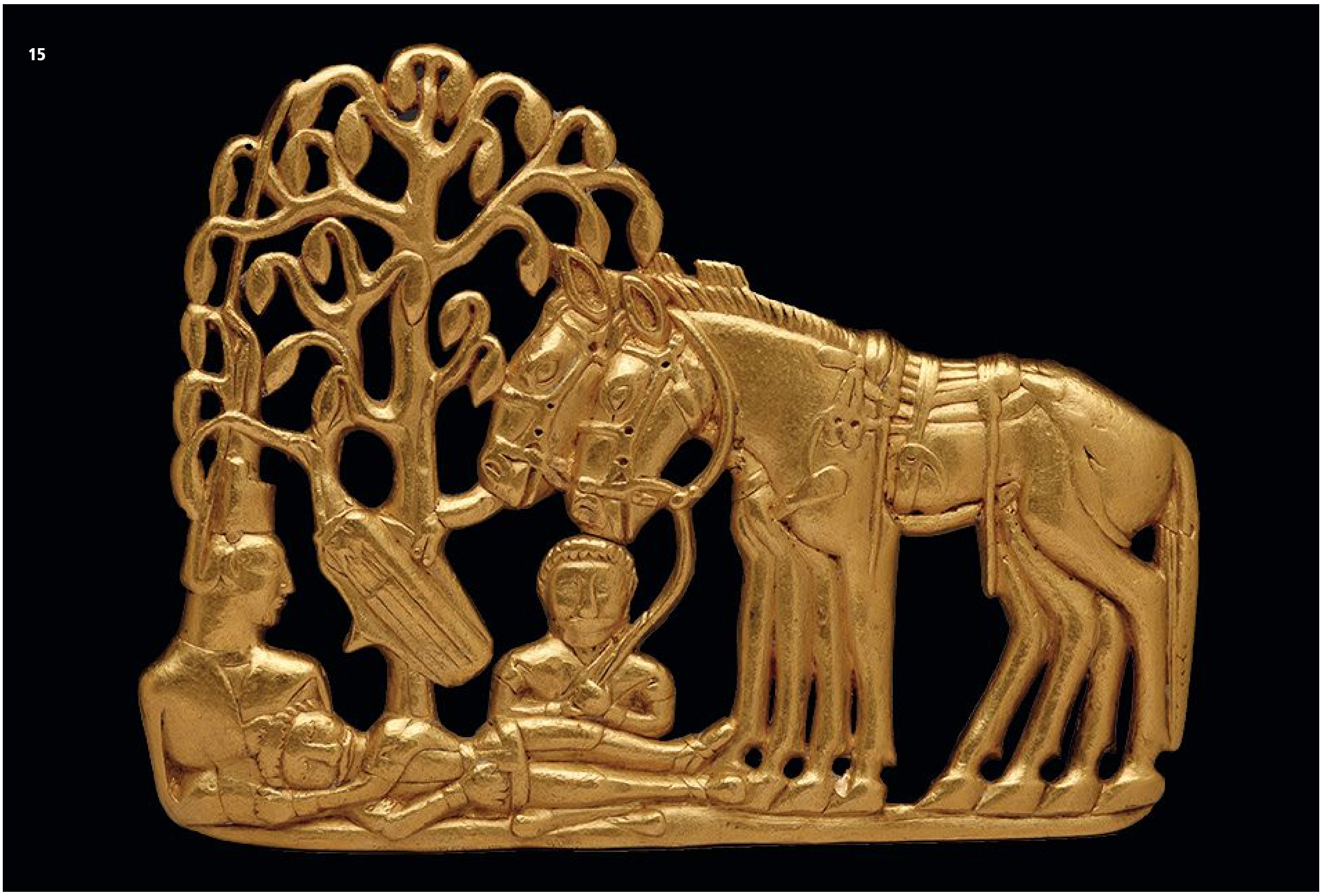
Ongoing scientific research is adding information on the Scythians. Infra-red imaging of further human remains shows that all of the bodies so far examined, whether of men or women and of different statuses, were tattooed. DNA analysis of past and present human populations show close connections between people in southern Siberia and the northern Black Sea: Herodotus stated that the Scythians in the latter region '*came from Asia*' and the new research supports this.

Dividing or grouping cultures based on details of object typology is an endless dilemma, and defining exactly what a Scythian was will continue to be debated, but this exhibition also shows there are common themes as well as local variations. Greek and Achaemenid sources refer to different tribes with different characteristics but all are referred to as Scythian. This is a unique chance to celebrate the success of their alternative economy and nomadic lifestyle and a complete contrast with the more familiar relics of the civilisations of the ancient Near East, China and the Classical world. ■

14

15. Belt plaque showing a Scythian funerary scene, gold, 4th–3rd century BC. H. 2.5cm. Siberian Collection of Peter the Great. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2017. Photograph: V Terebenin.

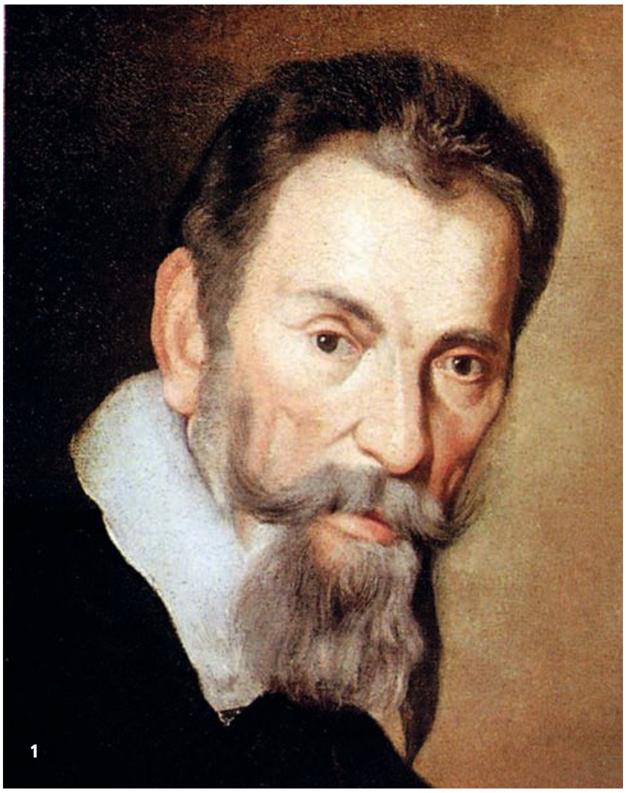
• *Scythians: Warriors of Ancient Siberia* is on show at the British Museum (britishmuseum.org/scythians) from 14 September 2017 to 14 January 2018. This BP sponsored exhibition is organised with the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and includes other generous loans from the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ashmolean Museum and the Royal Collection. A fully illustrated colour exhibition catalogue, edited by St John Simpson and Svetlana Pankova, is published by Thames and Hudson at £40 (hardback), £30 (paperback).



15

Magnificent Monteverdi

Tom Ford pays tribute to the ground-breaking Italian composer, born 450 years ago, one of the great musicians celebrated in the V&A's upcoming exhibition *Opera: Passion Power and Politics*



1. Detail of a portrait of Claudio Monteverdi, *circa* 1633, after Bernardo Strozzi (1581–1644), oil on canvas. Private collection. Paul Fearn/ Alamy Stock Photo.

2. The score of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, first published in Venice in 1609. Wikimedia Commons.

3. *View of Venice*, Frederick de Wit (1629–1706), engraving on paper. This is how Venice looked at the time of Monteverdi. V&A: E.1539-1900. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Let's get something straight from the outset: Claudio Monteverdi's 1607 music drama *L'Orfeo*, *favola in musica* was not the first opera. It wasn't even close. Like the story of Orpheus himself, the idea that Monteverdi single-handedly gave birth to the modern music drama is nothing more than myth.

As with most great landmarks in Western music, the rumblings begin long before the main event. For instance, Johann Sebastian Bach's monumental *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, from 1722, had many precursors and models.

We are also quick to assert that Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* was the first instance of choral music within a symphonic setting; yet his contemporary Peter Winter beat him to the punch with his *Schlacht-Sinfonie*, composed a good decade earlier in 1814.

Like Bach's and Beethoven's respective compositions, what should be attributed to Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* is the distinction of being the first 'great' example. In a tiny courtly room in Mantua in 1607, Monteverdi gave the world what can be described as the finest exposition of what we now know as '*opera*' (a term that was not used until the middle of the17th century).

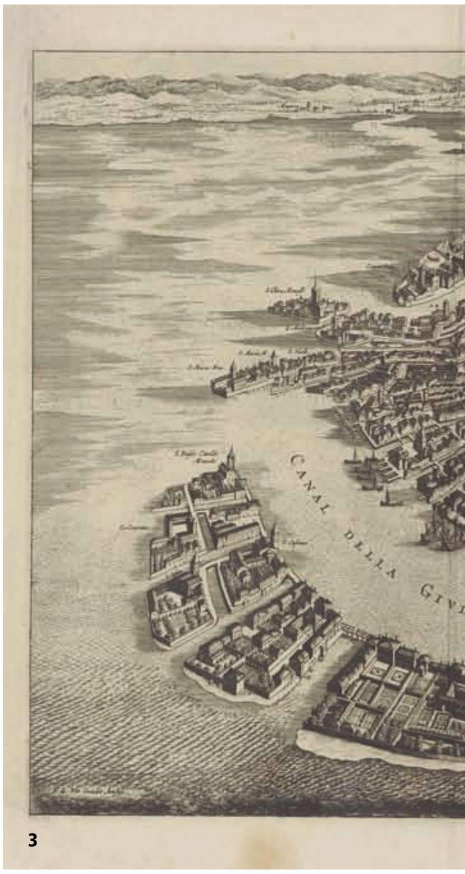
Music drama did not appear with a bang; rather, it gestated in and around the Italian provinces for most of the 16th century. The popular story that a small number of Florentine humanists consciously crafted the idea of music drama as a reinvention of the Ancient Greek tragedy is misleading. While admiration for antiquity was an ever-present sentiment in Renaissance Italy, the re-creation of Greek tragedy was not their sole intent.

As Monteverdi scholar Joachim Steinheuer explains, the model for the musicians and dramatists of the Italian Renaissance was immersed in an earthly, pastoral context:

'*Instead of depicting the tragic entanglements of kings and their like, situated in palaces or other appropriately courtly surroundings, early operas are generally set outdoors in country settings and are concerned with the love of gods, semi-gods, shepherds and nymphs. In this respect they belong instead to the contemporary tradition of the pastoral play, a dramatic genre that evolved only in early modern times, even though it referred to the long-standing, but non-dramatic bucolic tradition of Greek and Roman classic authors.*'

It was Angelo Poliziano's *Fabula di Orfeo* (1480) that sparked the Italian Renaissance love-affair with Orpheus and pastoral settings. His *fabula* was a dramatic sketch, comparatively short at 352 lines, performed at courtly feasts and allowing musical interludes and accompaniments. Historians have highlighted how Poliziano encouraged greater involvement from instrumentalists and vocalists – a foreshadowing of the modern music drama a century later.

A steady evolution transpired over the course of the 16th century: from the accompanied *fabula* came the intermedium – madrigals and solo songs with instrumental accompaniment specifically composed to be



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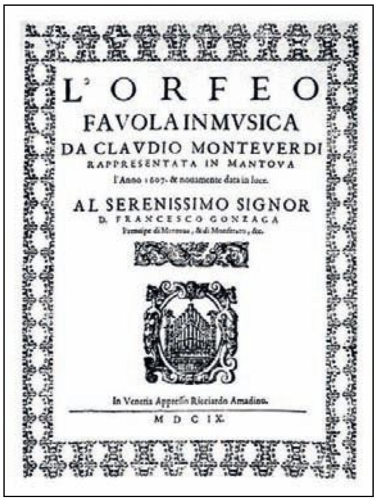


L' ORFEO
FAVOLA IN MVSICA
DA CLAVDIO MONTEVERDI
RAPPRESENTATA IN MANTOVA
l'Anno 1607. & nouamente data in luce.
AL SERENISSIMO SIGNOR
D. FRANCESCO GONZAGA
Prencipe di Mantoua, & di Monferrato, &c.

In Venetia Appresso Ricciardo Amadino.
M D C IX.

2

VENETIA
LA GIVDECA

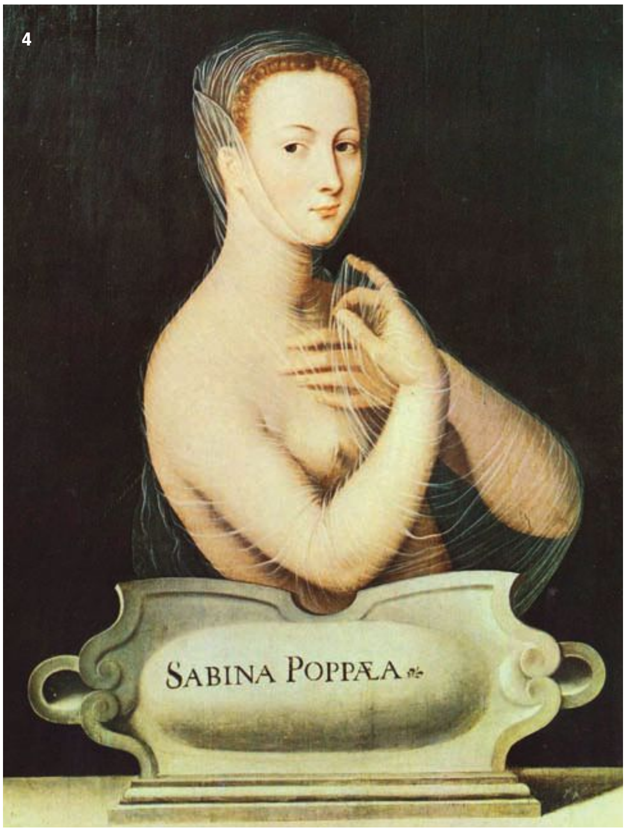
performed between acts of more serious dramatic entertainment at princely courts. Again, the use of pastoral setting was strong.

Come the 1570s, these Florentine composers, or *intermedi*, had begun to discuss the possibilities of song and text, its subsequent fusion and how best to present it in a longer, coherent form. Referring to themselves as a *camera* (club or gathering), they took inspiration from antiquity, believing the Greeks and Romans to have sung most of their drama.

Writing many years later, the *camerata*'s patron, Count of Vernio in Florence, Pietro Bardi, in whose palace the musicians, dramatists and theorists congregated, described the reason for the group's discussions. '*The academy's principal goal,*' he wrote in 1634, '*was to improve modern music and lift it somewhat above the miserable condition in which the Goths, chiefly, had plunged it after the loss of ancient music and the other noblest arts and sciences.*'

Bardi was under no illusion as to who was the first composer to present music and text in this new configuration: Jacopo Peri. '*The first poem that was sung upon the stage,*' recalled Bardi, '*was* La favola di Dafne *by Signor Ottavio Rinuccini, set to music by Peri with few notes and short scenes; it was performed in a small room and sung privately, and I was stunned at this marvel.*'

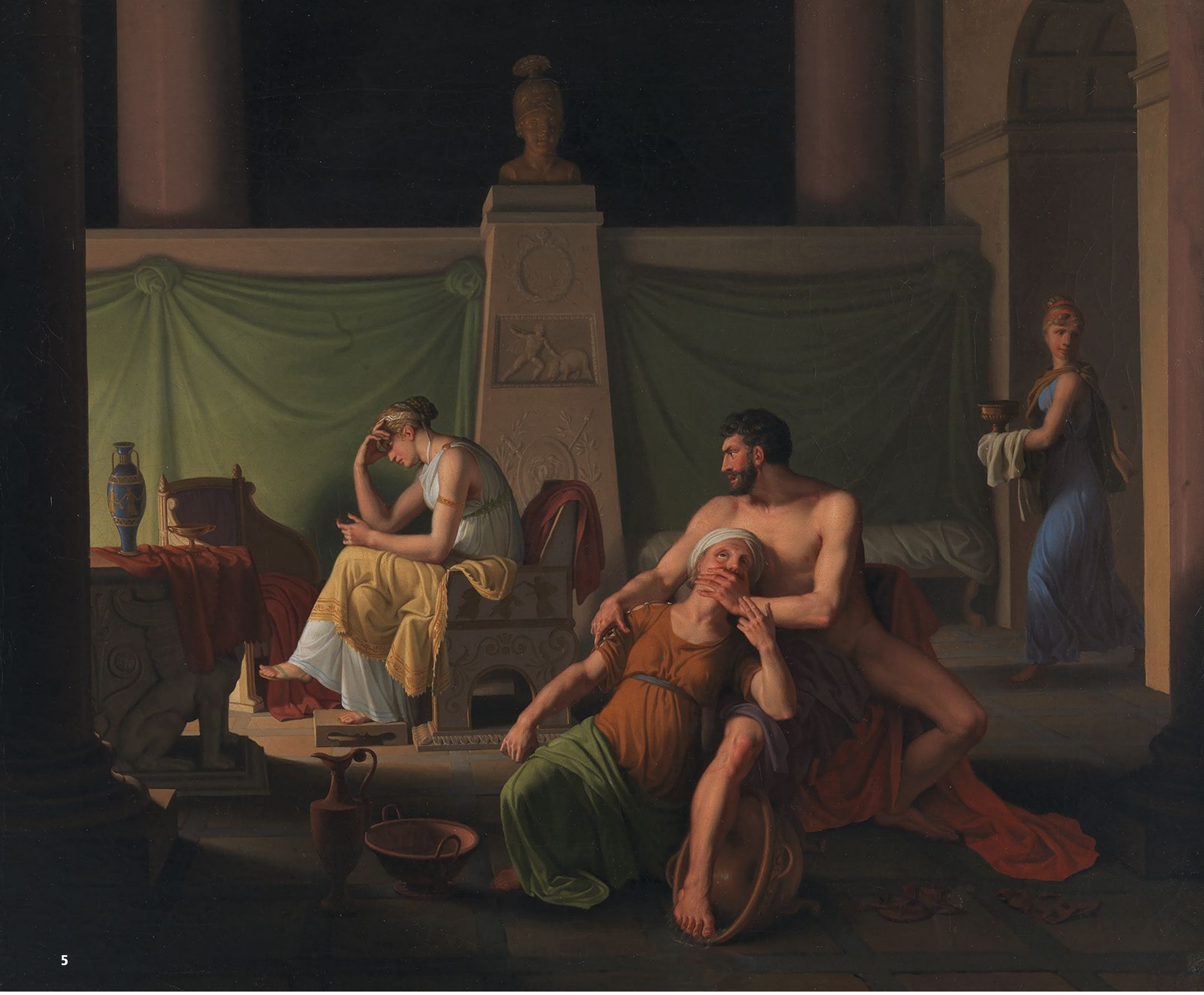
4. *Sabina Poppaea*, *circa* 1570, oil on canvas, Fontainebleau School. Museum of Art and History, Geneva. *The Coronation of Poppaea*, opened in Venice in 1642.



Music for this work was also provided by Jacopo Corsi. Although the exact date of this performance is unknown, it is likely to have taken place during the Florentine carnival season of 1597–98. Word of this domestic performance spread and Peri was commissioned to write another, *L'Euridice*; this time for a much grander occasion – Maria de'Medici and Henry IV's wedding festivities of 1600. Opera, or *scena rappresentativa* as its early innovators called it, had found an influential audience.

Peri and others '*had no lack of imitators in Florence,*' wrote Bardi, '*the first centre for this sort of music, and in other cities of Italy, especially Rome, who continue to be admired in their* scena rappresentativa*; among the best of whom it seems appropriate to rank Monteverdi.*'

Born in the north Italian town of Cremona in 1567, Claudio Monteverdi's career as a composer until 1607 consisted largely of writing madrigals at the court of Vincenzo I of Gonzaga in Mantua. As a frustrated court singer and viol player, Monteverdi had gained considerable fame from his various *Books of Madrigals*, which furthered the development of polyphonic music. Eventually rising to the post of Vincenzo's *maestro della musica* (court composer) in 1602, it was only natural, therefore, that Monteverdi should attempt the new form of music drama, bringing it to the Mantua Carnival festivities of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5. ***The Return of Odysseus,*** **1812, by Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783–1853), oil on canvas. H. 73.8cm. W. 86.2cm. National Gallery of Denmark. This scene, from Homer's *Odyssey,* also inspired Monteverdi's 1640 *The Return of Ulysses.***

6. Monteverdi's tomb, with a bust of the composer (right) and a manuscript on a stand, in the Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. Monteverdi moved to the city in 1613 and became director of music at the Basilica of San Marco. Lebrecht Music and Arts Photo Library/Alamy Stock Photo.

Monteverdi lay forth his genius for understanding humanity and representing it in music – a gift that has defied the centuries

1607. Monteverdi's choice of subject is hardly surprising. Any quick survey of the first four decades of the 17th century would demonstrate that the early composers felt a strong affinity with Orpheus and his divine musical gifts. Peri's *L'Euridice* (1600), Giulio Caccini's *Euridice* (1602), Domenico Belli's *Orfeo dolente* (1616), Stefano Landi's *La morte d'Orfeo* (1619) and Heinrich Schütz's *Orpheus und Euridice* (1638) are just a few examples of this early gravitation.

For his *L'Orfeo*, Monteverdi collaborated with Alessandro Striggio Junior, a young lawyer and occasional player of the viol. Striggio provided Monteverdi with a libretto, evidently crafted from his interpretation of the Orpheus story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Virgil's *Georgics*.

The premiere of *L'Orfeo*, *favola in musica* took place at the ducal palace in Mantua on February 24, 1607. The day before, a Mantuan nobleman wrote to his brother describing the prospect of such a '*curious*' undertaking: '*It should be most unusual, as all the actors are to sing their parts; it is said on all sides that it will be a great success. No doubt I shall be driven to attend out of sheer curiosity, unless I am prevented from getting in by the lack of space*.'

Notwithstanding the small room in which it was premiered and the '*narrow stage*' described by Monteverdi, the music drama was received favourably enough, so that an encore performance was demanded for '*all the ladies resident in the city*' (suggesting that only men attended the premiere). The cast, too, as far as can be gathered, was an all-male affair, with *castrati* filling the female roles.

Crown Prince Francesco Gonzanga instructed Striggio to have the libretto printed for the opening performance – '*so that everyone in the audience can have a copy to follow while it is sung*'. The music, however, was not published until 1609 (and again in 1615), and displays possible re-workings by Monteverdi in that time.

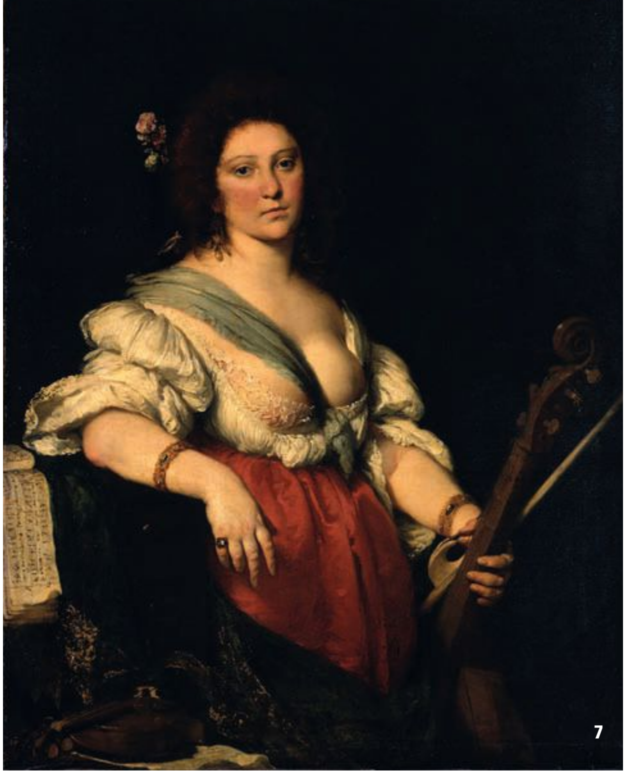
Part of the uniqueness of the score lies in Monteverdi's very fragmentary markings and instructions. As was common for that period, he encouraged instrumental ornamentation and embellishment, presenting his score as what today might be considered skeletal. This gives every performance of *L'Orfeo* its own distinct sound and identity.

This is not to say, however, that Monteverdi's music is either simple or incoherent. *L'Orfeo*'s structure and design point to a composer in complete control of his craft and the musical atmosphere in which it was written. Monteverdi deployed particular instruments for musical characterisation; for example, muted trumpets and trombones were used for the opening ceremonial *Toccata*, specifically '*before the raising of the curtain*'.

On other occasions, Monteverdi instructed on what should be played rather than how: '*performed to the sound of all the instruments*', or '*sung to the sound of five violins, three chitarrone, two harpsichords, a double harp, a double-bass viol and a sopranino recorder*', or '*to the sound of a regal, a chamber organ, five trombones, two bass viols and a double bass viol*'.

The Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin recognises his works' inimitable beauty. '*I think the drama in Monteverdi's operas is timeless. They deal with a richness of the senses. The stories are poetic and emotional. Monteverdi was a visionary.*'

Indeed, more so than any of his contemporaries, Monteverdi brought the various existing musical forms and modes together into a wonderfully innovative coalescence. He underlined his mastery as a madrigalist and polyphonic writer while effortlessly incorporating the monodic sung style, both in recitative and aria. With *L'Orfeo*, he established himself as the first great dramatist, displaying an intuitive understanding of the relationship between music and text.



7. *The Viola da Gamba Musician*, 1630–40, Bernardo Strozzi (1581–1644), oil on canvas. Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. This portrait is of Barbara Strozzi (1619–77), the adopted daughter of the poet and librettist Giulio Strozzi (1583–1682). She was a superb singer and composer: her eight volumes of printed music represent some of the best vocal chamber music of the period.

In 1616, Monteverdi criticised a proposed libretto, *Le nozze di Tetide*, because of its abstract characters, Zephyr and Boreal (west and north winds). Writing to Striggio, he declared: '*How should I, dearest friend, imitate the speech of the winds if they do not speak, and how should I stir the emotions with them? Arianna shudders because she is a woman, and Orpheus was stirred because he was a human being and not a wind! Arianna inspired me to a (dramatically justified) lament and Orpheus to a (dramatically justified) entreaty*!'

With this, Monteverdi lay forth his genius for understanding humanity and representing it in music – a gift that has defied the centuries. ■

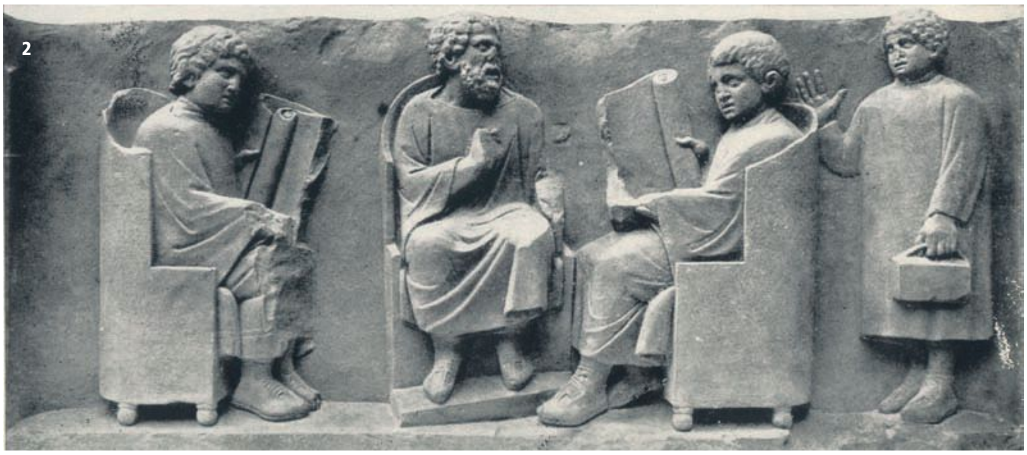
- *Opera: Passion, Power and Politics*: together, the V&A and the Royal Opera House are presenting a landmark exhibition exploring the story of opera from its origins in late Renaissance Italy to the present day, on show at the Victoria and Albert Museum (www.vam.ac.uk/Opera) from 30 September to 25 February 2018.
- *Monteverdi450:* for international concerts celebrating the composer's work in 2017, visit monteverdi.co.uk
- Monteverdi's opera *The Return of Ulysses* will be performed by the Royal Opera House at the Roundhouse in London from 10–21 January 2018. Booking opens to the public on 19 October. For further details and booking visit www.roh.org.uk/productions/the-return-of-ulysses-by-john-fulljames

6
SANCTISSIMAE VIRGINI
CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

Taking the

tablets

Paul Chrystal puts the record straight regarding how we know what we know about the Romans



1. The white marble Arch of Septimius Severus in the Forum in Rome, dedicated in AD 203 to commemorate victories of Emperor Septimius Severus and his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, over the Parthians in AD 194–95 and AD 197–99. Photograph: Paul Chrystal.

2. Roman sandstone relief showing a teacher and pupils with papyrus scrolls, 3rd century AD, from Neumagen, Gaul. Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier.

We assume that most of what we know about the Romans comes from the writings of Greek and Roman historians, such as Livy, Tacitus, Plutarch and Dio Cassius. While this is true up to a point, there are many other primary sources that combine to give us a more complete picture of the Roman world. The Romans had access to a mass of information and many communication systems, records and archives – all of which was engineered to disseminate and record data, legislation, propaganda – and also misinformation – to state and religious officials, citizens, the military and to the ubiquitous enemy, wherever they were in the Roman world.

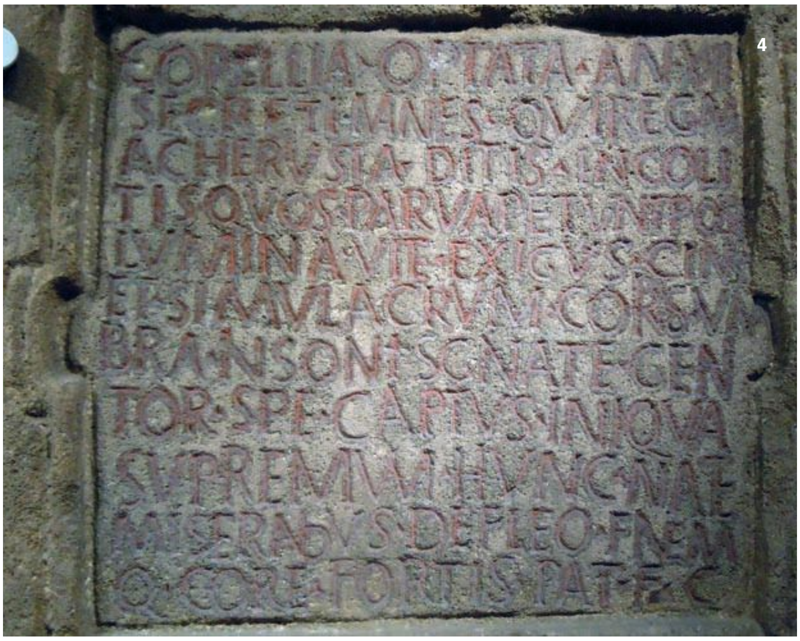
These additional sources are no less important than the work of Roman historians, letter writers, poets and novelists. They include a wealth of recorded information and communications that have survived for up to 3000 years in various forms. Indeed, these historians themselves would have relied heavily on earlier records as primary source material.

Together, they shine much-needed extra light on social, economic, political, legal, military, religious, linguistic and medical history. They sometimes lend a more objective and authentic picture, relatively free from the subjectivity and bias that can tinge and taint Classical authors, authors who may have ancient axes to grind or who are influenced by contemporary or past events and personal experience. Propaganda and political self-promotion apart, the non-literary records reflect everyday life and real facts and factors: indeed, it is very hard to embellish, misrepresent or exaggerate a receipt for dead sheep supplied to the local palace, or cargoes of grain shipped to Rome, or a list of rations. In essence they help to define ancient Roman life by telling it precisely how it was: often mundane in the extreme but invaluable for all that.

We all think we know what the Romans did for us: they gave us straight roads, aqueducts, central heating, public baths, flushing loos, sewers, water-powered mining machinery and so on. But, just as importantly, the Romans invented, developed and perfected records and record-keeping and numerous other methods of information storage and communication. It is the Roman obsession with creating, circulating and archiving official and personal documents that now enables us to have the relatively rounded picture we have of Roman history, politics, society, religion, economics, business and warfare.

Although only a small percentage of these sources are extant, they do, nevertheless, provide invaluable primary source material: any history needs to take account of these if it is to be as complete and credible as possible. Ancient documents were archived for posterity but many were lost when Roman cities were sacked and pillaged during invasions, or they have just rotted or crumbled

away. What remains includes tax records, lists of religious feasts and holidays, records of land-ownership, legal records and speeches, lists of Roman triumphs, public decrees, commercial inventories and countless other documents. They were all meticulously recorded on papyrus, vellum, parchment and bronze; they were inscribed on arches and columns, on tombstones, and scratched on to walls as graffiti.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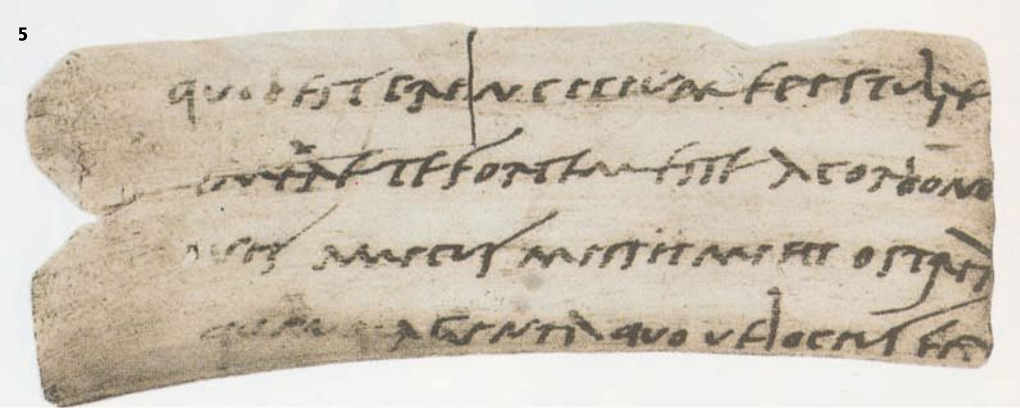
CORELLIA·OPTATA·AN·XIII
SECRETI MANES QVI REGNA
ACHERVSIA DITIS INCOLI
TIS QVOS PARVA PETVNT POS
T LVMINA VITE EXIGVS CINIS
ET SIMVLACRVM CORPORIS VM
BRA INSONTIS GNATAE GENI
TOR SPE CAPTVS INIQVA
SVPREMVM HVNC NATAE
MISERANDVS DEFLEO FINEM
Q CORELL FORTIS PAT F C

4. Roman funerary inscription on gritstone, AD 43-410. L. 90cm. W. 62cm. Yorkshire Museum. Made by a grieving father for his teenage daughter, Corellia, it reads: *'To the spirits of the departed. Corellia Optata, 13 years old. Ye hidden spirits that dwell in Pluto's Acherusian realms, whom the scanty ash and the shade, the body's image, seek after life's little day, I, the pitiable father of an innocent daughter caught by cheating hope, lament her final end. Quintus Corellius Fortis, the father, thad this made.'*

There was, of course, a long and rich tradition of record keeping before the Romans. The ancient Sumerians, Assyrians, Egyptians and Greeks were all, to one extent or another, avid, obsessive perhaps, archivists, record-keepers, library-builders and librarians. They all recorded and archived their laws, histories, economic activities and agricultural inventories on clay and stone. The Egyptians wrote on papyrus from which Romans went on to develop paper. Magic spells, dietary information, industrial inventories and medical diagnoses and therapies all found their way into these pre-Roman archives.

The latest discovery was reported in June 2017 when a 2,600-year-old message in Hebrew on a shard found in Judea was finally decoded. Cutting-edge imaging techniques

3. The reconstructed fine marble façade of the Library of Celsus in Ephesus in modern-day Turkey. Wikipedia.



5. Vindolanda Tablet, 20cm x 8cm, on which a letter is addressed to a *decurion* called Lucius regarding the gift of some oysters from a friend of the writer. The Trustees of the British Museum.

at Tel Aviv University revealed a desperate note appended to a routine order for stores. It was from a soldier in his desert fort to his quartermaster, begging: '*If there is any wine, send*,' A comrade called Ge'alyahu had, it seems, bagged all the unit's supplies of alcohol.

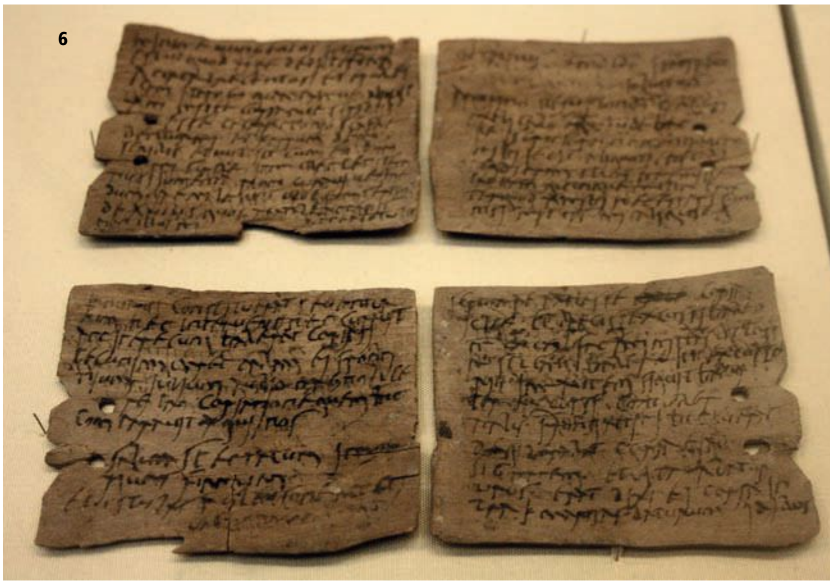
Extant Roman records include those kept in archives and libraries in the Roman world; *tabulae* and *laterculi*; various forms of epigraphy: monumental, funerary, milestones and so on; *fasti* (calenders); various types of publishing; graffiti; curse tablets; the law of The Twelve Tablets, the Theodosian Code and Justinian's Codification. But the two major finds in Britain are the Vindolanda Tablets and the Bloomberg Tablets.

The Vindolanda Tablets provide a fascinating record of daily military life at the edge of empire, along the northernmost edge of Britannia. These 752 writing tablets, which were discovered at Roman Vindolanda, just south of Hadrian's Wall, in 1973 and 1993, showed to us a hitherto unknown papyrus-substitute, thin postcard-sized leaves of wood on which were inscribed with pen and carbon-based ink day-to-day book-keeping records and letters. In themselves they were somewhat mudane in their *minutiae* but, historically, they were of seismic importance. Dating from between AD 90 and 120 (the building of Hadrian's Wall began in AD 122) at the time these tablets represented the largest collection of original Roman letters ever found. They were scored down the middle and folded to form diptychs with ink writing on the inner faces; the ink was made up of carbon, gum arabic and water.

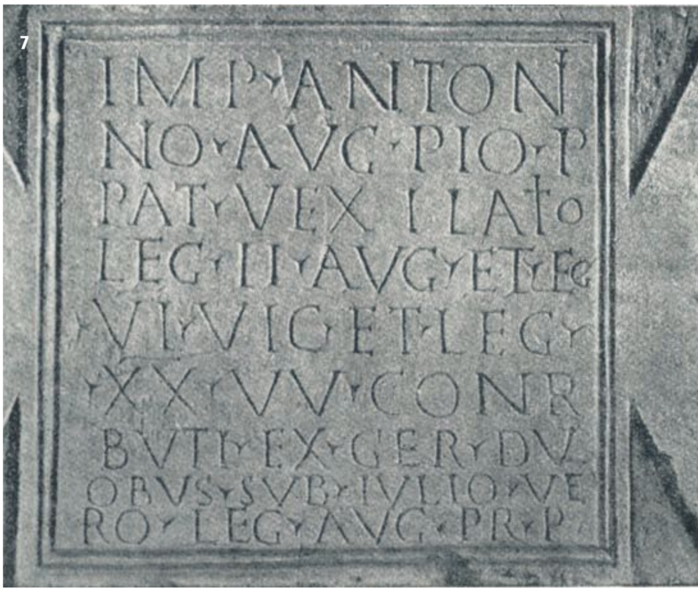
Two Roman auxiliary regiments, the 9th Cohort of Batavians and, before them, the 1st Cohort of Tungrians, are the stars of the tablets. Among the 400 officers and other ranks named, the Batavian prefect Flavius Cerialis features prominently, together with his wife Sulpicia Lepidina, who received the now famous birthday party invitation from her friend Claudia Severa, wife of Cerialis' colleague and fellow hunting aficionado Aelius Brocchus.

The tablets shed priceless light on officers, their familes and friends and colleagues. They reveal the daily grind of ordinary soldiers, their names and duties; military routine, duty-reports, leave and deserters; the supply of food, drink and other goods; merchants and contractors; army wives' life, visitors and entertainment as well as leisure activities like hunting, and religion.

The first tablet (No. 346),



6. Vindolanda Tablet, No 343, *circa* 182mm. Letter from Octavius to Candidus concerning supplies of wheat, hides and sinews. The Trustees of the British Museum.



7. Inscribed slab found on the site of the Aelian Bridge on the River Tyne in Newcastle upon Tyne. Pons Aelius was an auxiliary *castra* (military camp) and small Roman settlement on Hadrian's Wall. It was dedicated to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, *circa* AD 160, by the Legio Augusta II, Legio VI Victorius and Legio XX Valeria Victrix. Great North Museum: Hancock, Newcastle.

8. Vindolanda Tablet No. 291 provides a fascinating record of daily military life at the edge of empire, the northern-most edge of Britannia. 752 of these writing tablets were found at Roman Vindolanda, south of Hadrian's Wall. The Trustees of the British Museum.

9. Roman funerary monuments showing whole families, with inscriptions and, in the foreground right, a tile manufactured by the IX Hispana legion stationed in York. Yorkshire Museum.

excavated in 1973, was all about socks, sandals and underpants: '*I have sent (?) you ... pairs of socks from Sattua, two pairs of sandals and two pairs of underpants, two pairs of sandals... Greet ...ndes, Elpis, Iu..., ...enus, Tetricus and all your messmates with whom I pray that you live in the greatest good fortune.*'

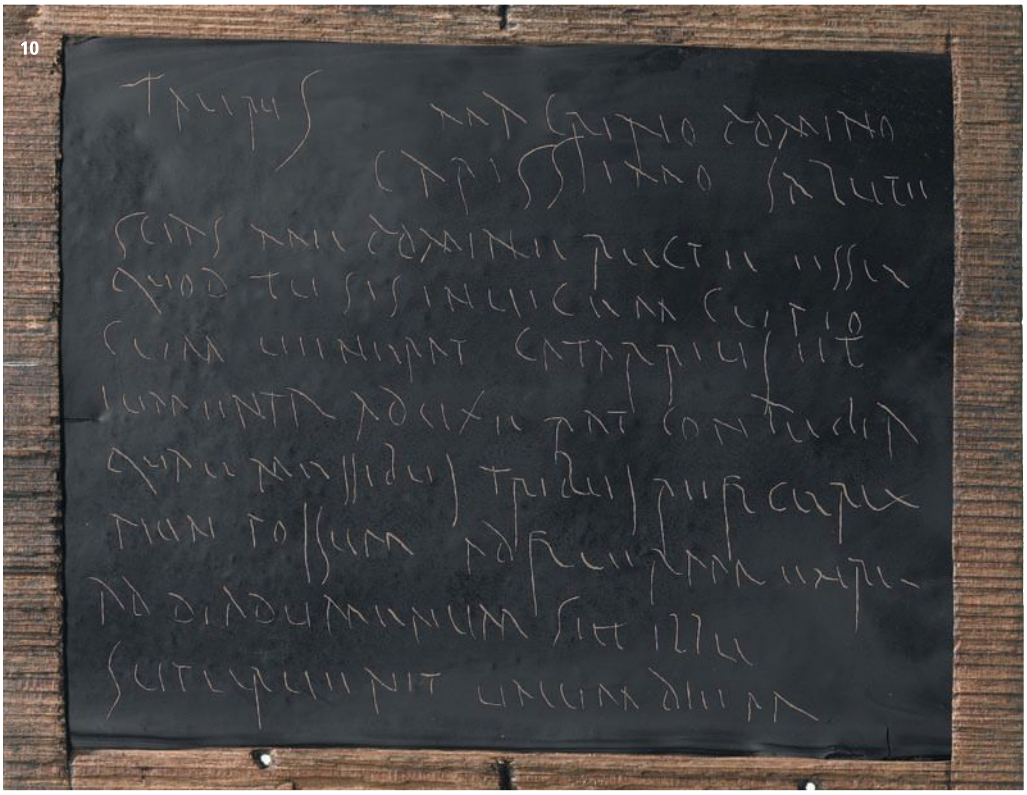
One of the letters is from one slave to another regarding payment for items needed for the Saturnalia festival. There is an account of food supplies, possibly for the fort commander's residence, which lists *garum* (the ever-popular fish sauce), beer, lard for cooking and barley for the household's livestock. In another letter, a man complains to his friend that he has yet to hear back from his previous letter.

Tablet No. 164, a memo, is especially interesting: '*...the Britons are unprotected by armour (?). There are very many cavalry. The cavalry do not use swords nor do the wretched Britons mount in order to throw javelins.*' As is No. 343, possibly from a civilian trader complaining to the governor that he had been flogged by a centurion: '*Accordingly* (?) *I implore your mercifulness not to allow me, a man from overseas and an innocent... he beat (?) me all the more ... goods ... or pour them down the drain* (?). *As befits an honest man* (?) *I implore your majesty not to allow me, an innocent man, to have been beaten with rods and, my lord, in as much as* (?) *I was unable to complain to the prefect because he was detained by ill-health I have complained in vain* (?) *to the beneficiarius and the rest* (?) *of the centurions of his* (?) *unit, one, about whose good faith you may inquire, to have been bloodied by rods as if I had committed some crime.*'

Serving soldiers were not officially permitted to marry but many no doubt did, building relationships with local women and starting families. One of the most fascinating Vindolanda Tablets shows that wives of officers clearly did accompany their husbands on service overseas. Claudia Severa, for example, sent a birthday party invitation to her friend Lepidina asking her to make her day special by coming to see her on 11 September. The body of the letter (Tablet No. 291) is written by a scribe but the postscript is written by Claudia and is the oldest example of a woman's handwriting in Latin in existence. It reads: '*Claudia Severa to her Lepidina greetings. On 11 September, sister, for the day of the celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm invitation to make sure that you come to us, to make the day more enjoyable for me by your arrival, if you are present* (?). *Give my greetings to your Cerialis. My Aelius and my little son send him* (?) *their greetings. (2nd hand) I shall expect you, sister. Farewell, sister, my dearest soul, as I hope to prosper, and hail.* (Back, 1st hand) *To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa.*'

Apart from providing copious and invaluable information relating to provincial military life and administration, the Vindolanda Tablets give us fascinating information on literacy among officers and their wives, rank and file soldiers and civilian contractors.

The Bloomberg Tablets were excavated on a three-acre site between 2010 and 2013, before the start of the construction of the Bloomberg LP building on Queen Victoria Street that unearthed a treasure trove of thousands of preserved personal artefacts. They ranged from leather boots and good luck charms, to an amber gladiator amulet and a horde of 405 preserved wooden writing tablets dating from AD 50–80 buried 40 feet beneath the ground. They were soon acclaimed as the earliest handwritten documents to be found in Roman Britain, predating the Vindolanda Tablets by up to half a century. The Bloomberg site was already well-known as the site of the Temple of Mithras, partially excavated in the 1950. In 2010,



10. Reconstructed text from Bloomberg Tablet WT 29 as it may have originally appeared. It reads: *'Taurus to Macrinus, [my] dearest Lord, greetings. [I hope you are] in good health. Catarrius took my beasts of burden away – investments that I cannot replace for [the next] three months.'* With kind permission of Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA).

when the Bucklersbury building was demolished, archaeologists had another a chance to dig and numerous artefacts were discovered, including the Bloomberg Tablets.

We have the subterranean River Walbrook to thank for their astonishing preservation: wood usually rots away over time, but the diptych tablets were preserved by the thick, wet mud of the river, which reduced exposure of the tablets to oxygen.

Decipherment of the tablets, written in Roman cursive style, is still being undertaken. The 88 legible writing tablets that have been translated yield personal correspondence, loan notes and bills of sale. Legal documents include the appointment of a judge to hear a case between two litigants, named as Litugenus and Magunus, on 9 November, AD 78, and part of the alphabet (ABCDIIFGHIKLMNOPQRST) appears on one tablet, suggesting the presence of Britain's first school.

There is also the oldest intrinsically dated financial document to emerge from the city of London, dated to 8 January, AD 57. It reads: '*In the consulship of Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus for the second time and of Lucius Calpurnius Piso, on the 6th day before the Ides of January (8 January AD 57) I, Tibullus the freedman of Venustus, have written and say that I owe Gratus the freedman of Spurius, 105 denarii from the price of the merchandise which has been sold and delivered. This money I am due to repay him or the person whom the matter will concern...*'

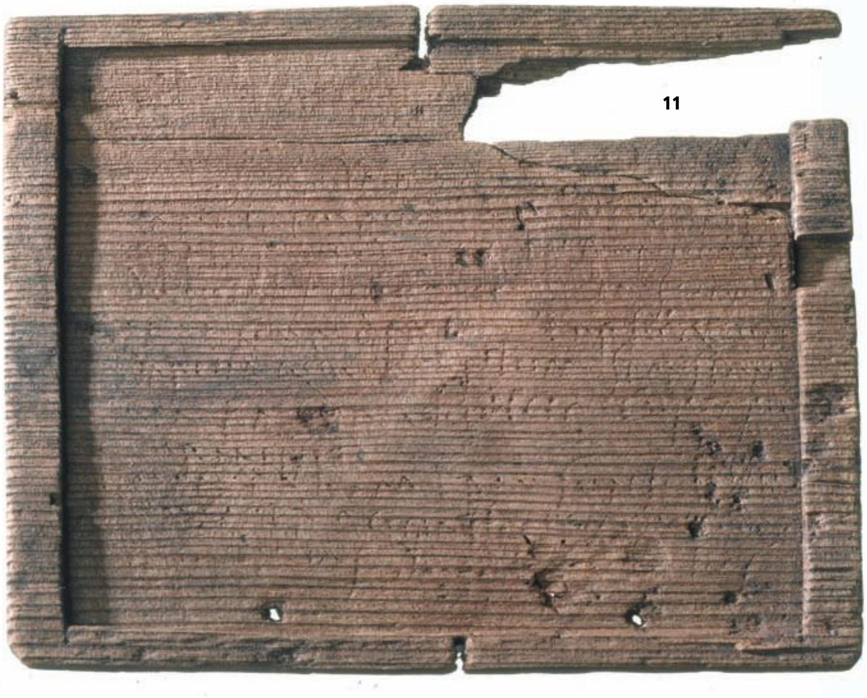
The Bloomberg Tablets provide us with a record-keeping goldmine – an amazing record of life in Londinium – for the identification of occupations and professions, with more than 100 names of people of different walks of life who lived in London then: slaves, merchants, soldiers and politicians.

One notable example is Julius Classicus, who was a Roman auxiliary commander, later known as a leader of the Batavian revolt and the prefect of the 6th Cohort of Nervians in the first decades of Roman London. The first known mention of the name of the city here supersedes the previously earliest reference in Tacitus's *Annals*. Dated between AD 65 and AD 70–80, it reads '*Londinio Mogontio*' which translates '*In London, to Mogontius*' (a Celtic personal name), this was 50 years before Tacitus wrote.

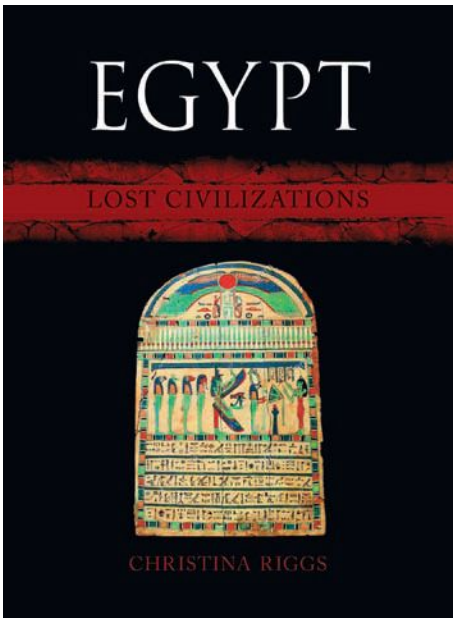
There is also reference to the reprovisioning of London after it was sacked around AD 61 by Boudicca's army of Iceni. A contract, dated 22 October, AD 62 details the transportation of 20 loads of provisions from Verulamium (St Alban's), which was also sacked by the Iceni, to London.

Roger Tomlin, who deciphered and translated these tablets, says: 'They provide some very personal glimpses into the lives of the first Londoners… These include an urgent appeal *("I ask you by bread and salt")* by a man named Atticus who beseeches his correspondent to make payments totalling 36 denarii as quickly as possible; as well as the woes of a financier named Titus whose ill-judged loan has made him a laughing stock in the market. *("…they are boasting through the whole market that you have lent them money," his correspondent writes. "Therefore I ask you in your own interest not to appear shabby … you will not thus favour your own affairs …")*. ■

• ***Roman Records and Communications*** **by Paul Chrystal will be published in hardback by Fonthill Media at £20 ($32.95) in November 2017.**



11. Stylus tablet WT 57 from the Bloomberg Tablet excavations, a *procuratio*, which sets out aspects of legal representation. With kind permission of Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA).



Egypt: Lost Civilizations
Christina Riggs
Reaktion
216pp, 46 illustrations, 31 in colour
Hardback, £15

Pharaonic Egypt fascinated the ancient Greeks and Romans, and it continues to fascinate us today, but the nature of the fascination changes. The Greeks and Romans looked back to Egypt for philosophy and science. We look to Egypt for aesthetic inspiration, and to ponder the technical mysteries of pyramid-building. Christina Riggs' *Egypt* is one of Reaktion Books' accessible and informative *Lost Civilizations* guides. It is, however, much more than a chronological survey of ancient Egypt; it is also an elegant and intriguing thematic interpretation of that civilisation's grip on our imagination ever since.

Riggs begins her narrative in Sigmund Freud's consulting-room. Freud, Riggs writes, had '*a lifelong passion for archaeology*'. His observations on the memory and perception of ancient Rome remain indispensable to cultural historians. On his desk, stood more than three dozen statuettes from different ancient cultures, many of them bronze or carved stone images of Egyptian gods, like the baboon of Thoth, a god of wisdom, writing and record-keeping, who wrote down the results of the Weighing of the Heart, which decided the eternal fate of the deceased. Freud's housekeeper recorded that he often stroked the smooth head of the stone baboon, like a pet.

Freud theorised about repression and forgetting. Why, Riggs asks, have modern Western societies striven to remember ancient Egypt? Why does an Egyptian obelisk stand in the Place de la Concorde in Paris, where the guillotine once stood? Why is the Luxor Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas so-named , and shaped like a pyramid? From Las Vegas, Riggs returns to the source, the temple of Thoth at el-Ashmunein, the ancient Hermopolis, on the western bank of the River Nile. We tend to think of Hermes as the messenger of the Greek gods, but in antiquity he was also a god of '*language, writing and learning*'. When Greek speakers traded and settled around the eastern Mediterranean, they drew comparisons between the Olympian pantheon and the local gods. The Egyptian Aset and Wesir are still better known under their Greek sobriquets, Isis and Osiris. It made both '*linguistic and theological sense*' to identify Hermes with Thoth.

Like the names of Isis and Osiris, this fusing of Egyptian and Greek imagery would retain a powerful influence, and not just through the transmission of Egyptian religion to the Greek and Roman worlds. Through time Thoth/Hermes came to symbolise '*the totality of what was known about the mysteries of the cosmos and of human nature – what we would now be likely to refer to as science and philosophy*'.

For the Renaissance scholars who laid the foundations of Western science and philosophy, the legendary figure of Hermes Trismegistus – the '*thrice-great*' appellation is a translation of the Egyptian '*wer wer wer*' – represented the source and goal of their labours. This is why, in 1488, Giovanni di Stefano included the figure of Hermes Trismegistus (this time modelled after one of the last Byzantine emperors) in the decorated floor of the Cathedral of St Catherine in Siena. It is why the ideal of secret Egyptian knowledge – the word '*hermetic*' derives from the allegedly secret transmission of the purported '*Hermetic tradition*' – features strongly in recent New Age thought. It is also why Sigmund Freud, the author of *Moses and Monotheism*, surrounded himself with Egyptian objects, and patted his stone baboon as Thoth, himself, might have done.

This is only one of the fascinating tales in Riggs' weaving of ancient Egypt's language, religion, hydrology, art and politics with the visions of its would-be heirs and conquerors. There is '*no definitive ancient Egypt*', she concludes, for '*wherever we look for the lost civilization of the Egyptians, we cannot help but find ourselves*'.
Dominic Green

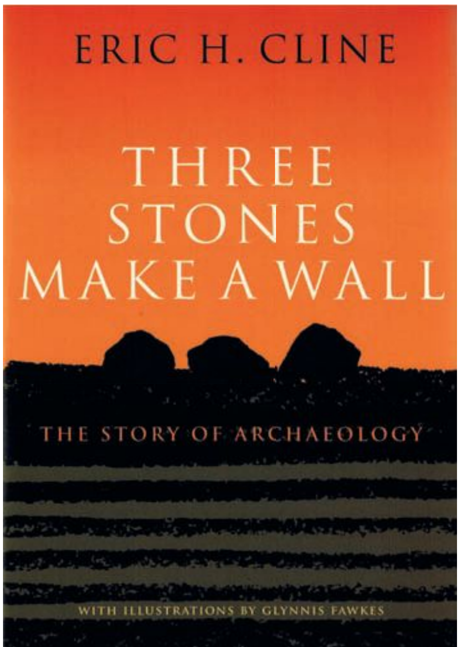
Three Stones Make a Wall: The Story of Archaeology
Eric H Cline
Princeton University Press
458pp, 57 drawings by Glynis Fawkes and two maps
Hardback, £30/$35

Archaeology is a modern discipline, a creation of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason. Yet speculation and supposition are the necessary evils of archaeological interpretation. '*One stone is a stone,*' goes the archaeologists' ungrammatical axiom, '*Two stones is a feature. Three stones is a wall. Four stones is a building. Fives stones is a palace. Six stones is a palace built by aliens.*'

Eric H Cline, the eminent American archaeologist, has more than 30 years' field experience in the Eastern Mediterranean, and a deep understanding of archaeological history. *Three Stones Make A Wall* is a superb one-volume history of the discipline – in its sweep and expertise, a modern heir to CW Ceram's *Gods, Graves and Scholars,* published in 1949.

Cline's approach is essentially chronological, from the origins of modern archaeology – in Emmanuel Maurice de Lorraine's discovery, in 1752, of 300 papyrus scrolls at Herculaneum – to the present and future, with the looting of antiquities amid war in the Middle East, and the remarkable progress of the archaeologist's technical arsenal. Each phase of the story, from Pompeii to Troy, from Troy to Egypt and Mesopotamia, from Mesopotamia to Mesoamerica, is narrated from the first strike of the trowel on ground to the current state of excavations. At Herculaneum, archaeologists now use CT scans, X-rays, laser imaging and DNA analysis. They record and document in the field '*directly onto iPads with cloud-based storage for the data*'. At Rome, the Mussolini-era reconstruction of the Ara Pacis altar site was renovated in 2006, but doubts persist as to its accuracy. Similar doubts attend Yigal Yadin's interpretations of his finds at Masada in Israel. A '*simple reading of the data*' leads to necessary speculation, because data is never complete.

Mixed in with the legendary personalities and sites of the great age of archaeology are Cline's personal experiences. On his first dig, he is lowered into a well in the Stoa at Athens. In 2008, searching for reasons why a Canaanite house at Megiddo in Israel might have been destroyed, he finds modern bullet casings. Back at his base, George Washington University, Cline consults an adjunct instructor who also works at the



Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The instructor matches the bullet casings to a Czech machine-gun from the 1940s.

A second thread in the story is technical. Short chapters explain how the techniques of fieldwork developed. Flinders Petrie pioneered vertical excavation. Mortimer Wheeler invented a method of excavating blocks five metres square, with a one-metre 'balk' in between. The result, which resembles a giant, '*rectangular ice-cube tray*', allows archaeologists to keep track of the site's stratigraphy, the stacking of historical layers in the soil.

Stratigraphy is recorded with a Harris matrix, first as a rough field sketch, later as a detailed grid. William Libby's legacy, Carbon-14 dating, is applied to organic materials. Thermoluminescence can determine the age of a clay potsherd, by measuring electromagnetic or ionizing radiation.

The newest method, rehydroxylation, measures the amount of water in a piece of pottery. When researchers at Canterbury tested a medieval brick with rehydroxylation, they were baffled to find the brick was only 66 years old. Then they realised that the brick came from an area of Canterbury that had been bombed during the Second World War. A fire had '*reset*' the brick's water content back to zero.

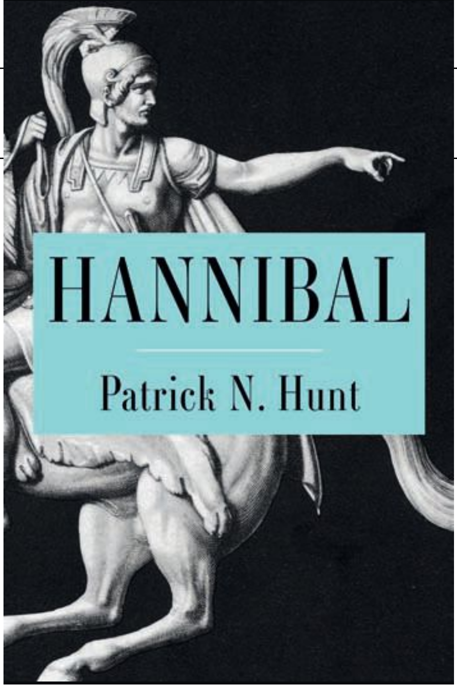
Cline follows his story from the first hominids to '*future archaeology*'. If we undergo a Pompeii-style disaster, what will future hominids make of the '*ubiquitous blobs of metal, plastic, glass and circuitry*' held by almost every skeleton? Interpretation will always be essential to archaeology, and *Three Stones Make a Wall* is a masterpiece of historical interpretation.
Dominic Green

Hannibal

Patrick N Hunt
Simon & Schuster,
384pp, nine maps
Hardback, £18.99

The Stanford historian Patrick Hunt follows the method of Polybius, the ancient historian who, attempting '*to match text and topography*', visited the sites about which he wrote. For more than 20 years, Hunt has followed the trail of Hannibal, the Carthaginian soldier who, in the second of the three Punic Wars (218–201 BC) became the first general to defeat the armies of Rome. *Hannibal* is the summation of Hunt's researches, and an accomplished synthesis of research and narrative.

Hannibal is one of those obscure legendary figures whose deeds stand for his motives and personality. He was born in Carthage (modern Tunis) in 247 BC, the son of the general Hamilcar Barca, who was away at the time, fighting the Romans in Sicily. According to the Roman historian Valerius Maximus, Hamilcar, a veteran of the First Punic War, boasted that his sons Hannibal, Hasdrubal and Margo were '*lion cubs reared for Rome's destruction*'. Other Roman sources record that, as a child, Hannibal accompanied his father on campaign in Spain and that, before departing, he swore allegiance to the Carthaginian deity Ba'al.



The Carthaginians were of Phoenician origin; their language and alphabet, Punic, were, like their gods, Semitic. For centuries, they dominated Mediterranean trade – until the rise of Rome. Carthage was a mercantile power, and planted colonies like Cartagena ('New Carthage') and Akra Leuke (now Alicante) in Spain in order to secure their trade networks. Rome expanded because of its agricultural needs, and Romanised its subjects to secure its food supplies.

The Roman victory in the First Punic War was considerable enough to threaten Carthage's mercantile wealth, but not conclusive enough to create a new balance of power. After Hamilcar's death in 229 BC – drowned in the Tagus River, Hunt writes, during an ambush – Hannibal prepared Carthage's pre-emptive revenge. The Second Punic War remains one of the great military campaigns: the march with Iberian war elephants from Spain, across southern France, and up the Pyrenees in winter; the ambushes in the mountain passes by the local Celts and the '*logistical supply nightmare*' of feeding an army that moved faster than its pack animals; the ascent of the half-starved, frozen Carthaginians over '*the wind-swept treeline, where only a few blizzard-blasted scrub trees clung to the rocks*'; and the descent towards battle with the armies of Rome.

Hunt thinks Hannibal is like Odysseus, a cunning soldier. His victories at Trebia, Lake Trasimeno and, especially, the double envelopment with cavalry at Cannae, in 216 BC, were masterpieces of strategy. But he lacked the siege engines necessary for an assault on Rome, itself. Pushing into southern Italy, he occupied much of the peninsula. The Romans adopted an attritional strategy, and eventually defeated Hannibal at Zama near Carthage in 203 BC.

The '*disaster*' at Zama imposed a heavy indemnity on Carthage and turned Hannibal into a civilian. He won an election as Carthage's *suffete* (chief magistrate), but he was a '*marked man*', too powerful and popular for the oligarchs on Carthage's Council of Elders, and began to move his wealth out of the country. In 195 BC, he jumped before he was pushed. In an Odyssean ruse, he threw a party for the sailors at Cercina, persuaded them to use their sails as awnings at the feast, then slipped away to Tyre, to fight as a mercenary.

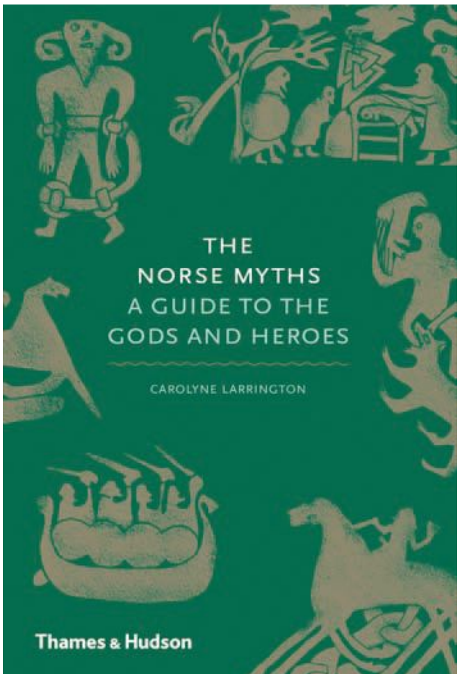
Hannibal died in 183 BC at Libyssa (near modern Istanbul), betrayed by his patrons, but he eluded the Romans once more, by taking poison. Apart from '*terrifying*' the Romans, Hunt writes in concluding this gripping biography, Hannibal had '*taught a reluctant Rome how to wage war*'.
Dominic Green

The Norse Myths: A Guide to the Gods and Heroes

Carolyne Larrington
Thames & Hudson
208pp, 100 black-and-white illustrations
Hardback, £12.95

Images of long-bowed ships emerging from the mist, bringing mayhem and terror, are what come to mind when there is a mention of the Vikings. While their warlike character and international strikes left a physical and psychological mark on Europe and beyond, they also bequeathed to the world a rich store of myths that have endured to the present day.

Now, new re-tellings of these myths have been undertaken by Carolyne Larrington, Professor of Medieval European literature, University of Oxford and Official Fellow and Tutor, St John's College. In her comprehensive survey of the subject, *The Norse Myths: A Guide to the Gods and Heroes,*



Professor Larrington first examines the sources and origins of the myths, before introducing us to the Norse deities. She then considers the myths according to subject matter: those that relate to the creation of the cosmos, the gods' adversaries, the nature of the human heroes and the heroes of the Viking world and *Ragnarok*, the prophesied end of the world.

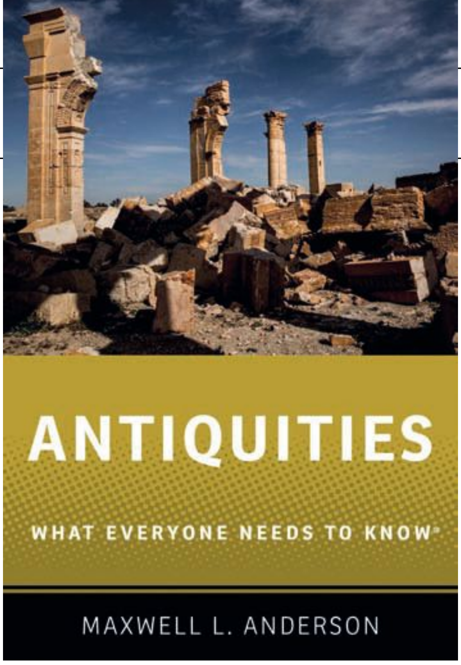
Imagination clearly wasn't lacking in the frozen north, and it is an exotic world that these myths portray. Central to the universe stands the *Yggdrasill* (World Tree) whose roots define the various regions of the world. Different realms lie under the tree, dragons fly about it and four stags graze in its upper branches. Dwarves work beneath the ground creating treasures that the gods covert. An interesting lot with odd attributes (some travel around in chariots drawn by goats and cats), the gods preside over a range of extraordinary creatures including dwarves, giants, serpents, elves and, later, humans. Treachery and violence feature frequently in the relationships and adventures of this rich cast of characters.

Even after the coming of Christianity to Iceland, the old Norse myths and legends endured. New poems were composed using traditional motifs and some were converted into ballads. Since the Icelandic language changed little, Larrington points out, their myths, preserved in sagas, songs and poems, remained well understood over centuries.

In the 17th century, a collection of poems called the *Edda* were edited and translated into Latin, which aided their circulation around Europe. The first English translations appeared in the early 18th century. As Norse-speaking people emigrated widely, depictions of characters and episodes from the myths have been found far afield, and archaeological finds have furthered our understanding of the Norse world.

These myths and legends were popularised by the Brothers Grimm and Richard Wagner in Germany and by William Morris and JRR Tolkien in Britain. Thanks to them and, now, to television series, such as *Game of Thrones*, Scandinavian myths and legends are vibrantly alive today.

Clearly set out with a good array of illustrations, Larrington's guide is a valuable, engaging resource for anyone wishing to explore the mysterious and dramatic world of the Norsemen and their gods.
Diana Bentley



Antiquities: What Everyone Needs to Know

Maxwell L Anderson
Oxford University Press
250pp
Paperback, £10.99

Lovers of antiquities well know that provenance, the circumstances of discovery, ownership, location and display all give rise to conflicting opinions, heated debate and occasional prosecution. In *Antiquities: What Everyone Needs To Know,* Maxwell L Anderson examines our long relationship with antiquities at a time when the subject is becoming ever more complex.

An expert in Roman art history, Anderson has taught at Princeton University, been an art museum director for three decades and is a former President of the Association of Art Museum Directors in America, where he chaired a Task Force on Archaeological Materials and Ancient Art. He is now Executive Director of the New Cities Foundation. So he is perfectly qualified to guide us through the antiquities maze. All his knowledge and experience have been distilled in this refreshingly clear, engaging account of the acquisition and ownership of antiquities and the various approaches to the stewardship of our cultural heritage.

Set out in a question-and-answer format, he takes an objective stance, addressing a wide field of relevant subjects – from the history of collecting antiquities and the treaties and laws governing them, to chance finds, excavation and looting, the realities of storage, dispersal and display and the vexed questions of retention, restitution and reparation.

Welcome light is shed on the many different considerations involved in the conundrums that beset this subject. While the acquisition of ancient artefacts is an age-old pastime, the rise of the modern nation-state, as Anderson recounts, has fuelled the desire to protect archaeological heritage as a part of a national, rather than a religious or cultural, identity. The Second World War released a tide of claims and counter claims for antiquities, and a heightened awareness of the dangers posed to archaeological material. The desire to regulate the trade in antiquities spurred the development of a complex array of international treaties and national laws, which the author succinctly explains.

But with international and national laws looming large, some questions are growing ever-more pressing. What should happen, he asks, to antiquities that lack a reliable provenance? Now spurned by museums and responsible private collectors, they find themselves increasingly without a home and go to fuel the black market.

Anderson cites prime examples of ownership disputes, that are sometimes centuries-long. The case of 'Priam's Treasure', for example, the golden hoard discovered in Troy in modern-day Turkey by Heinrich Schliemann in 1837, is one. Spirited away by Schliemann to Berlin, it remained there until after the Second World War when it was seized by the Russians. Its new location was not confirmed until 1996; it is in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. The dispute over its rightful ownership continues. Not only wars but shipwrecks, too, show how random events can lead a country to claim and possess antiquities from other lands.

Will our new absorption with the present and immediately accessible information dull our appetite for the past? Hopefully not for, as Anderson observes; the aura of antiquity still works its magic on us. Underwater archaeology, he maintains, is the huge and excitingfrontier of the future and there is no reason to doubt that we can expect many transfixing new discoveries.
Diana Bentley

Victorian Horace: Classics and Class

Stephen Harrison
Bloomsbury
216pp
Hardback, £85

Horace's elegant descriptions of landscapes and of love, as well as his biting invectives have secured his position today as one of the great writers of antiquity, giving us phrases such as *carpe diem* (*Odes* 1.11.8) and the immortal words, '*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*' (*Odes* 3.2.13), which live on in Wilfred Owen's haunting First World War poem, *Dulce et Decorum Est* (it is now often referred to as '*the old Lie*').

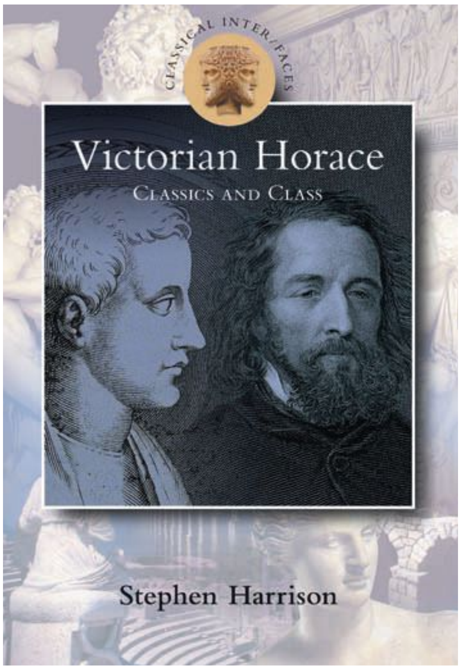
The Victorians viewed Horace (65–8 BC) as a model gentleman. Studying his work was part of the education of the elite and a mark of a person's refinement. As a result, he appears again and again, not just in the poetry of the period, but in novels too. In *Victorian Horace: Classics and Class*, the last in the *Classical Inter/Faces* series that has been running for the past 20 years, Stephen Harrison, Professor of Latin Literature at Oxford and author of several works on Classical reception, explores the Roman lyric poet's literary afterlife in 19th-century Britain.

One of the most celebrated modern poets to engage directly with Horace is AE Housman – in his exquisite translation of *Odes* 4.7, *Diffugere nives*. Although the poem appears in the posthumous collection *More Poems* (1936), it was first published in 1897. Housman said of the original Latin version that it was '*the most beautiful poem in ancient literature*'. He was by no means alone in his admiration of Horace. Alfred, Lord Tennyson in particular turned to his long-dead predecessor several times. He, along with many others, translated Horace's work as a schoolboy, but the Victorian poets also show a relationship with the ancient poet that extends beyond mere translation.

While it may be no surprise to see poets imitating earlier poets, the influence of Horace can often be seen in prose too. Harrison's survey of the Roman poet in the work of major Victorian novelists, such as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope and Thomas Hardy, produces some insightful observations. Thackeray, for instance, had favourite quotations. *Post equitem sedet atra cura* or '*dark Care sits behind the rider*' (*Odes* 3.1.40) appears in various guises more than 10 times throughout his work. Horace's description of Fortune (*Odes* 3.29.49–56) is also alluded to frequently. On occasion it is even intermingled with a quotation from John Dryden's version of the poem ('*I puff the prostitute away*'), showing that the character who delivers the citation is familiar with Horace's original work and later renditions of the *Ode*. In Eliot, we encounter more casual, less diligent quoters of Horace than in Thackeray, and in cases like these, Horatian references in direct speech attest to the interesting relationships between the speaker, the addressee, the reader and the Classics.

Quoting passages in the original Latin and in translation, this thorough book examines the role of Horace before and after the Victorian period, setting the 19th-century appeal of the ancient poet in a wider cultural context as part of a dialogue down the centuries from 1st-century Rome till now.

Lucia Marchini



CLASSICAL CONUNDRUMS

Adam Jacot de Boinod poses a vocabulary quiz from Latin and Ancient Greek

Can you guess the correct definition from the following three options for:

1) iunceus (Latin)

A) a tuft of hair
B) without energy
C) made of rushes

2) liguros (Ancient Greek)

A) finicky, fussy
B) loudly, clearly
C) bald

3) obex (Latin)

A) a bolt, bar, barrier
B) angry, furious
C) being short but still powerful

4) tektos (Ancient Greek)

A) secret, hidden
B) melted, soluble
C) a stupid person, a fool

5) vennuncula (Latin)

A) a nail
B) a feather
C) a kind of grape

6) skia (Ancient Greek)

A) a fight
B) a cloak
C) a shadow

7) umifer (Latin)

A) containing moisture
B) bearing arms
C) a branch

8) apotmos (Homeric Greek)

A) difficulty in speaking
B) undrinkable
C) ill-starred

9) querquetum (Latin)

A) a square garden
B) an oak wood, an oak grove
C) a complaint

10) pterux (Ancient Greek)

A) a wing
B) a stutterer
C) with the head held low

11) repexus (Latin)

A) bent backwards
B) combed anew, just combed
C) contrite, repentant

12) daspletis (Homeric Greek)

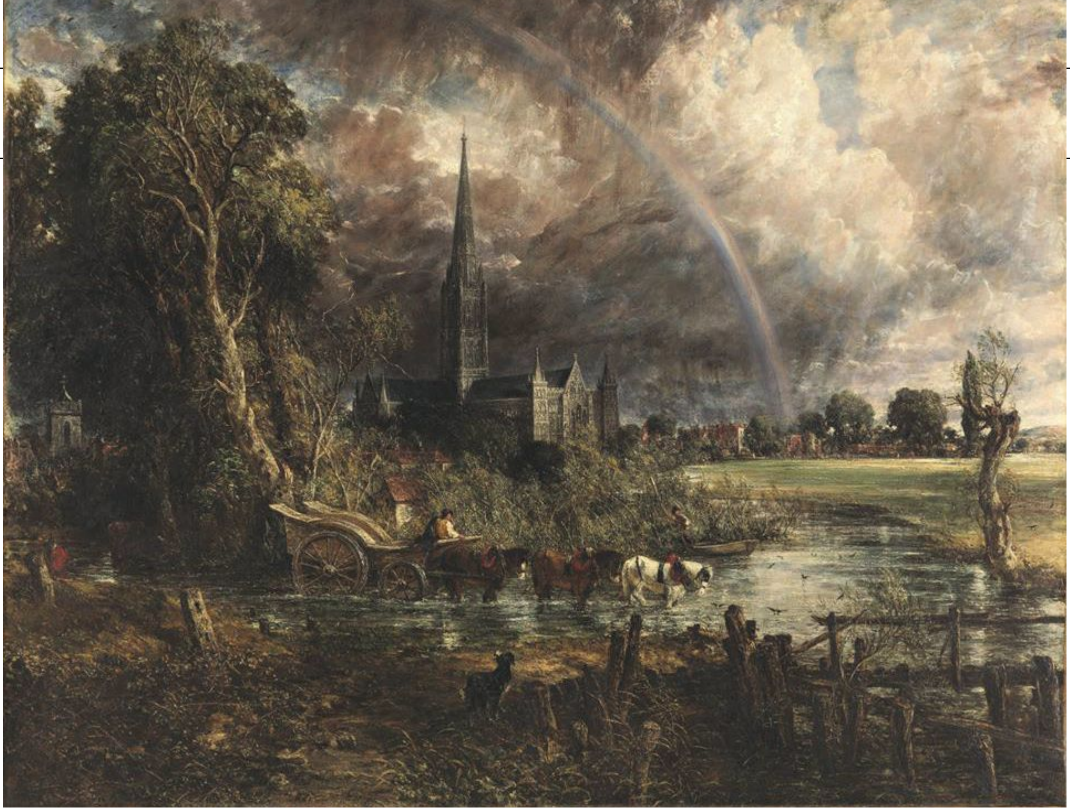
A) clear, transparent
B) eating or drinking especially noisily or greedily
C) hard-smiting, dread

- Adam Jacot de Boinod has worked as a researcher on the BBC television quiz programme *QI*. He is the author of *The Meaning of Tingo* and creator of the iPhone App *Tingo*.

ANSWERS

1C) made of rushes. 2B) loudly, clearly. 3A) a bolt, bar, barrier. 4B) melted, soluble. 5C) a kind of grape. 6C) a shadow. 7A) containing moisture. 8C) ill-starred. 9B) an oak wood, an oak grove. 10A) a wing. 11B) combed anew, just combed. 12C) hard-smiting, dread.

CALENDAR



TATE, LONDON 2013. PURCHASED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND, THE MANTON FOUNDATION, ART FUND (WITH A CONTRIBUTION FROM THE WOLFDON FOUNDATION) AND TATE MEMBERS

UNITED KINGDOM

CAMBRIDGE

Degas: A passion for perfection

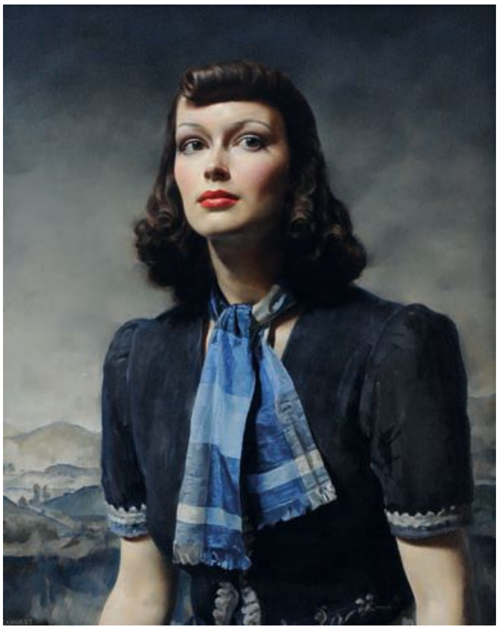
The Fitzwilliam's collection of paintings, drawings, etchings, pastels, monotypes and sculptures in bronze and wax, counterproofs, and letters by Degas – the most extensive and representative in the UK – will be put on display to mark the centenary of the artist's death on 27 September 1917. Exploring how Degas experimented with techniques, repeatedly reworked compositions and poses, and drew inspiration from Old Masters and Classical antiquity, the exhibition has sculptures of dancers, charcoal drawings of female bathers, and scenes of café life. Among the works on show are a group of drawings from King's College Cambridge, bequeathed in 1946 by John Maynard Keynes, who bought them in 1918 and 1919 from Degas' posthumous studio sales in Paris.

Fitzwilliam Museum
+44 (0)1223 332900
(www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)
From 3 October 2017 to
14 January 2018.

Sampled Lives: Samplers from the Fitzwilliam Museum

More than 100 embroidered and stitched samplers offer a rare glimpse into the lives of ordinary young women in the past. The pieces, whose makers range in date from mid-17th-century English Quakers to early 20th-century school pupils, give an insight into education, employment, family, status and needlework skills.

Fitzwilliam Museum
+44 (0)1223 332900
(www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)
Until 8 April 2018.



FERENS ART GALLERY

CHESTER

ARK

The interior of Chester cathedral and the historic spaces around it provide a splendid backdrop for 90 sculptures by more than 50 artists. Works in bronze, silver, concrete, marble, wood, steel, aluminium, limestone, granite, copper, leaves, resin, acrylic, tin and hair range in size from 5cm to 11.6m. Among the artists featured are Damien Hirst, Antony Gormley, Lynn Chadwick, Barbara Hepworth, Sarah Lucas, Elisabeth Frink and Eduardo Paolozzi.

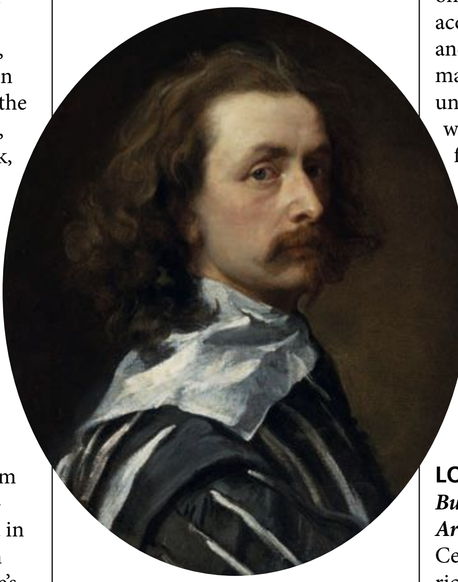
Chester Cathedral
+44 (0)1244 324756
(www.chestercathedral.com)
Until 15 October 2017.

EDINBURGH

Constable and McTaggart

John Constable's impact on Scottish landscape painter William McTaggart (1835–1910) is examined in this display, which includes Constable's monumental *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831 (above right) and McTaggart's *The Storm*, 1890. McTaggart saw Constable's paintings a number of times during the 19th century, but his style changed in the 1880s when 118 works by Constable were on display in Edinburgh. Constable's influence can be seen in *The Storm* – in the scale of the painting, the depiction of the approaching storm, and in the use of a variety of brush strokes.

Scottish National Gallery
+44 (0)131 624 6200
(www.nationalgalleries.org)
Until 25 March 2018.



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

True to Life: British Realist Painting in the 1920s and 1930s

Abstract art became popular after the Second World War and soon overtook the Realist tradition that flourished in Britain between the wars. This exhibition brings together the remarkably life-like paintings of more than 50 technically accomplished Realist artists, including Meredith Frampton, Laura Knight and Gerald Leslie Brockhurst whose *By the Hills*, 1939, is shown left.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art
+44 (0)131 624 6200
(www.nationalgalleries.org)
Until 29 October 2017.

Looking Good: The Male Gaze from Van Dyck to Lucian Freud

Sir Anthony Van Dyck's final *Self-Portrait, circa* 1640 (left) visits the Scottish National Portrait Gallery – the only Scottish venue on the painting's tour following its acquisition for the nation in 2014 – and joins other works that put the male image, identity and appearance under the spotlight. This exhibition, which brings together portraits, from the 16th century to today, charts courtiers' hairstyles, the rise of celebrity, interest in male beauty and personal grooming and representations of gender and sexuality.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery
+44 (0)131 624 6200
(www.nationalgalleries.org)
Until 1 October 2017.

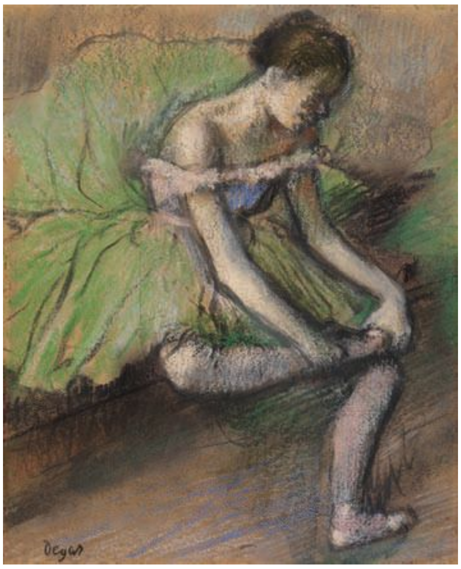
LONDON

Buildings That Fill My Eye: Architectural Heritage of Yemen

Celebrating the diversity of Yemen's rich and colourful architecture, this exhibition considers the array of building styles and traditions that have developed through time, starting with the ancient cities

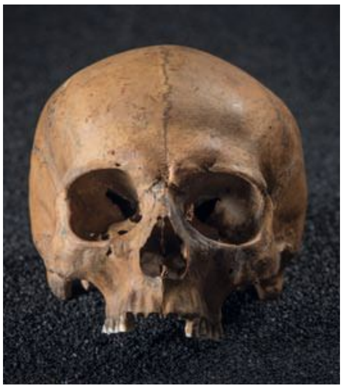
ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST/
© HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II 2017

compiled by Lucia Marchini



© CSG CIC GLASGOW MUSEUMS COLLECTION

and World Heritage sites, Shiban, Sanaa and Zabid. Builders have helped to establish close-knit communities with distinct cultural identities, dealing with challenging terrains, and responding to conflict through the creation of forts and fortifications, and characteristic tall houses with no windows on the ground floor.
Brunei Galley, SOAS
+44 (0)20 7898 4915
(www.soas.ac.uk/gallery)
Until 23 September 2017.



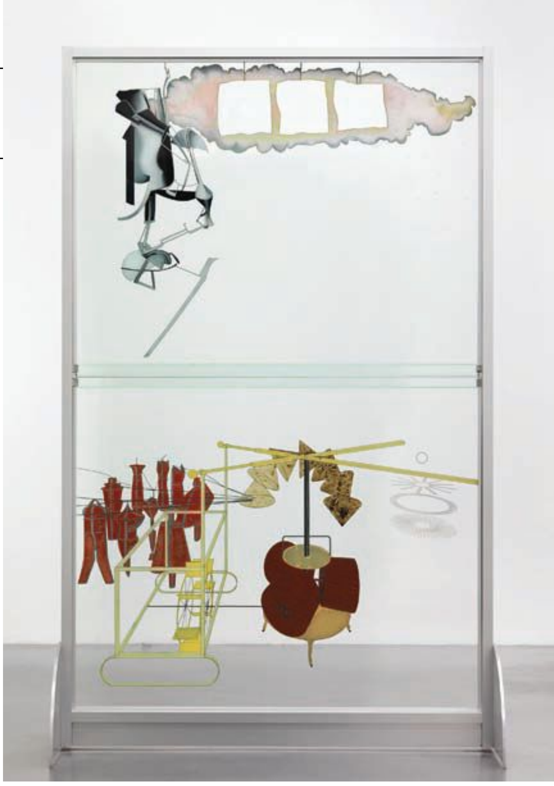
© MUSEUM OF LONDON

Royal Gifts
During this year's annual summer opening of Buckingham Palace (the 25th), more than 200 gifts presented to the Queen throughout her long reign will be displayed in the State Rooms. These official gifts often represent the artistic traditions or local craftsmanship of the countries she visted. They include: a carved totem-pole, presented by Mayor Frank J Ney of Nainaimo, British Columbia; a paperweight, made from a fossilised dinosaur bone and given to her Majesty during an official visit to Canada in 1971; and also a gold octagonal box (left) presented by the Sultan of Brunei during her State Visit to the wealthy sovereign state in 1972. All the gifts offer an insight into the Queen's role and relationship with the local people from over 100 different countries.
Buckingham Palace
+44 (0)303 123 7300
(www.royalcollection.org.uk)
Until 1 October 2017.

Trauma
As part of the *Londinium Festival* – a celebration of Roman London (for further details see page 61) – a Roman skull (below left) believed to be that of a gladiator is on view at the city's Roman amphitheatre. Found during excavations in the Walbrook Stream, the skull, which dates to *circa* AD 150, shows signs of substantial head trauma around the time of death. Curated by the Museum of London, the exhibition also looks at representations of gladiators in Londinium and the lives of those who came to the amphitheatre to spectate or compete.
Guildhall Art Gallery
+44 (0)20 7332 3700
(www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)
Until 29 October 2017.

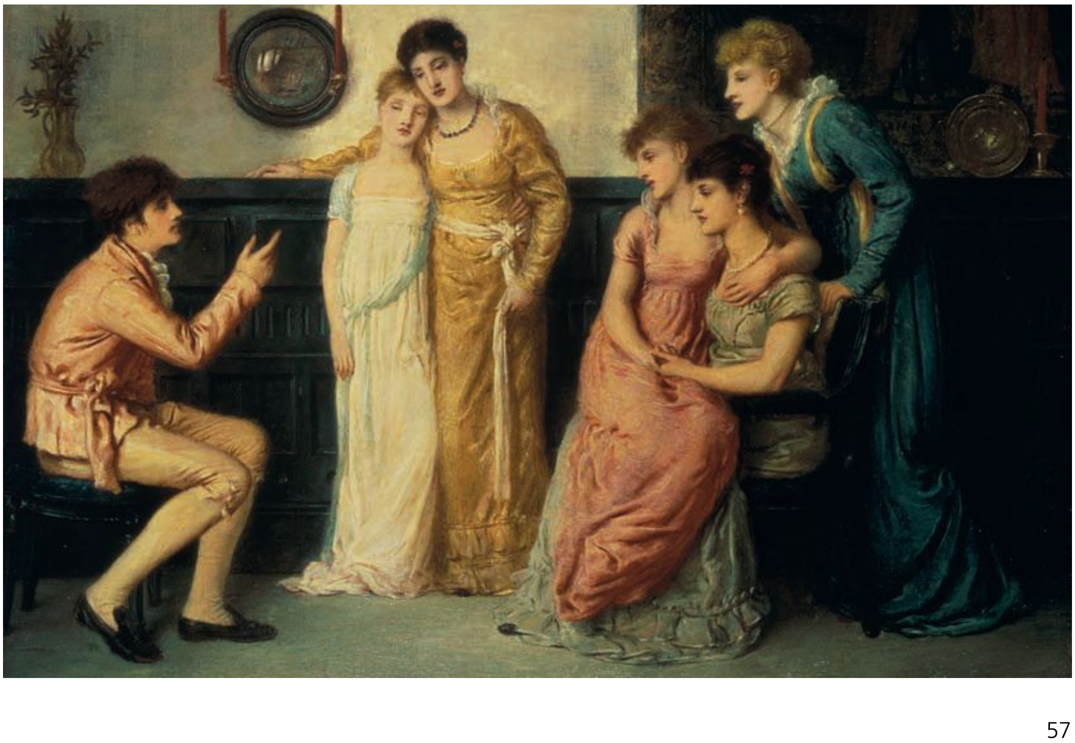
Drawn in Colour: Degas from the Burrell
Another exhibition commemorating the centenary of Degas' death, this show presents a group of works by the artist from the Burrell Collection in Glasgow alongside others from the National Galley and other collections. Sir William Burrell (1861–1958), a shipping magnate, collected a large number of Degas pastels from throughout his career that illustrate some of the artist's favourite subjects. *The Green Ballet Skirt, circa* 1896 (left), shows his love of ballet, while pictures of horse-racing and private scenes of women at their toilette also appealed to him. Degas turned to pastel when his eyesight began to fail, and bold colours became important in contemporary art. Most of these pictures have not been seen outside Glasgow since they were brought here in the early 20th century.
National Gallery
+44 (0)20 7747 2885
(www.nationalgallery.org.uk)
From 20 September 2017 to 7 May 2018.

Reflections: Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites
The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood admired Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait,* 1434, acquired by the National Gallery in 1842, and this painting shaped their views on draughtsmanship, colour, technique and the symbolic meanings of objects. For the first time, the 15th-century masterpiece will be shown alongside works that it inspired, by Rossetti, Millais and Holman Hunt. A variety of responses to Van Eyck's great work can be seen, particularly in the representation of domestic scenes and the use of convex mirrors to depict real and illusory spaces, as in Simeon Solomon's *A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies*, 1870 (below).
National Gallery
+44 (0)20 7747 2885
(www.nationalgallery.org.uk)
From 2 October 2017 to 2 April 2018.



© TATE, LONDON, 2017 / © SUCCESSION MARCEL DUCHAMP/ADAGP, PARIS AND DACS, LONDON 2017

Dalí/Duchamp
Two highly original artists Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) and Salvador Dalí (1904–1989) met in the 1930s and remained friends until Duchamp's death. As well as looking at the personal links between the two Surrealists, this exhibition examines their aesthetic and philosophical connections through more than 80 works, including of Duchamp's masterpiece, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (*The Large Glass*), 1915 (Richard Hamilton's 1965–6/85 reconstruction, is shown above). Duchamp's 'readymades',



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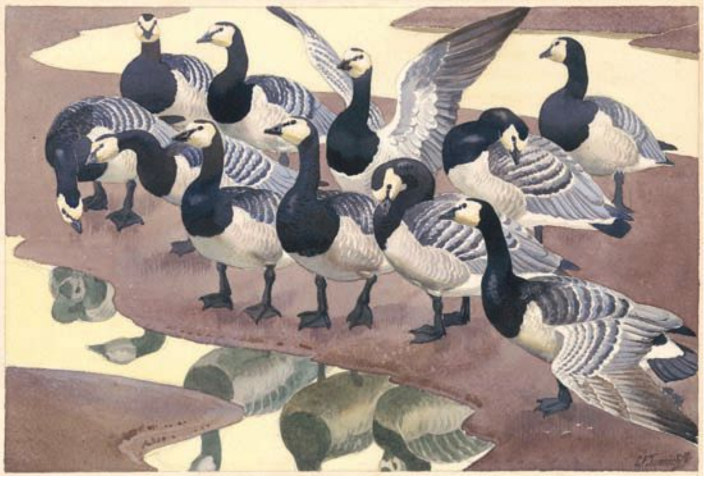
CALENDAR



© ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, LONDON

notably a 1964 replica of his iconic urinal, which he called *Fountain*, 1917, and Dalí's iconic *Lobster Telephone*, 1938, are also on show, as well as paintings, sculpture and archival material – all imaginative pieces exploring how the two artists treated the body and the object, with subjects as divers as time and space, energy, gravity and quantum theory.

Royal Academy of Arts
+44 (0)20 7300 8000
(www.royalacademy.org.uk)
From 7 October 2017 to
3 January 2018.

Second Nature: The Art of Charles Tunnicliffe RA

The work of celebrated 20th-century wildlife artist, printmaker, and book illustrator, Charles Tunnicliffe (1901–79), takes centre stage in this exhibition. His naturalistic depictions of birds, such as a charming watercolour depicting a gaggle of geese and entitled *Solway Company,* 1944 (above), and other wild creatures stemmed from close observation, but they were always shown as a living part of the environment, not simply as specimens. Tunnicliffe, who grew up on a farm in Cheshire before moving to Anglesey, illustrated Henry Williamson's classic *Tarka the Otter, 1932,* and the *What to Look For* Ladybird series; these and his commercial designs are on show.

Royal Academy of Arts
+44 (0)20 7300 8000
(www.royalacademy.org.uk)
Until 8 October 2017.

Adam Nathaniel Furman: The Roman Singularity

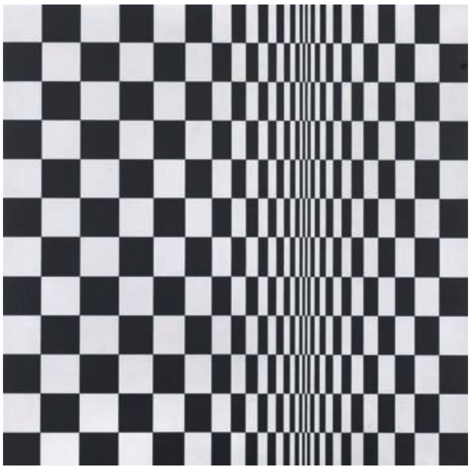
Coinciding with the 15th London Design Festival, a city of 3D-printed models by architectural designer Adam Nathaniel Furman encapsulates Rome's significance as a destination for thinkers, full of history and art throughout the centuries. Accompanying the city is a new work by Furman, *Pasteeshio*. Made from 3D-printed glazed ceramics arranged into a larger composition, the sculpture sits alongside *Pasticcio,* the column of fragments made by Sir John Soane, prompting comparisons between the 19th- and 21st-century works.

Sir John Soane's Museum
+ 44 (0) 20 7405 2107
(www.soane.org)
From 16 September to
10 December 2017.

Egypt Uncovered: Belzoni and the Tomb of Pharaoh Seti I

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of Giovanni Battista Belzoni's discovery of the tomb of Seti I on 17 October 1817, this exhibition tells the story of the extraordinary former circus strongman and Seti I's white alabaster sarcophagus. It charts the sarcophagus' long journey to London, including the party Soane threw to mark the arrival of his prized acquisition.

Sir John Soane's Museum
+ 44 (0) 20 7405 2107
(www.soane.org)
From 11 October 2017
to 14 April 2018.



© 2017 BRIDGET RILEY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COURTESY KARSTEN SCHUBERT

Plywood: Material of the Modern World

Though often overlooked and seemingly unglamorous, plywood is a versatile, economical and strong material used in designs for many types of objects, such as aeroplanes, skateboards and canoes. Examining the global impact of the material from the 1850s to the present, the exhibition brings together more than 120 objects that reflect how the image of plywood was transformed from a cheap product best hidden to a celebrated element of modernist design, as in Charles and Ray Eames' chairs.

V&A
+44 (0)20 7942 2000
(www.vam.ac.uk)
Until 12 November 2017.

NOTTINGHAM

Kaleidoscope: Colour and Sequence in 1960s British Art

British Art in the 1960s often used bold colours and unexpected shapes as it explored rationality and irrationality, order and waywardness, while at the same time following some sort of order based on repetition, sequence and symmetry. Paintings and sculptures by more than 20 artists reveal a common language across a range of movements, such as Op Art, Pop Art, Constructivism, and New Generation sculpture. *Movement in Squares*, 1961 (below left) by the queen of Op Art Bridget Riley, is on show alongside work by Phillip King and William Turnbull.

Djangoly Gallery, Nottingham Lakeside Arts
+44 (0)115 846 7777
(www.lakesidearts.org.uk)
Until 24 September 2017.

OXFORD

Bodleian Treasures: 21 pairs and a Tropical Forest

This selection of highlights from 12 million items in the Bodleian's extensive collections reveals some renowned rarities alongside less familiar treasures. Among them are: Shakespeare's First Folio, Handel's *Messiah*, William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and the illustrated Sanskrit religious text *Shikshapatri*.

Weston Library
+44 (0)1865 287400
(www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)
Until 11 February 2018.

UNITED STATES

BOSTON, Massachusetts

Follow the North Star: Inuit Art from the Collection of Estrellita and Yousuf Karsh

As the Canadian Confederation reaches its 150th anniversary, the Museum of Fine Arts is marking the milestone with a presentation of Inuit prints from the collection of portrait photographer Yousuf Karsh and his wife Estrellita. Most of the pieces are stonecuts, printed from blocks of soapstone, and stem from the printmaking cooperative at Cape Dorset, north of Hudson Bay, where the technique was introduced in the late 1950s. Works by prominent Inuit artists, such as Kenojuak Ashevak, Agnes Nanogak, Jessie Oonark, Pudlo Pudlat, and Lucy Qinnuayuak explore the themes of family, hunting, shamanism, and tradition and modernity. A selection of small-scale sculptures is also on show.

Museum of Fine Arts
+1 617 267 9300
(www.mfa.org)
Until 31 December 2017.

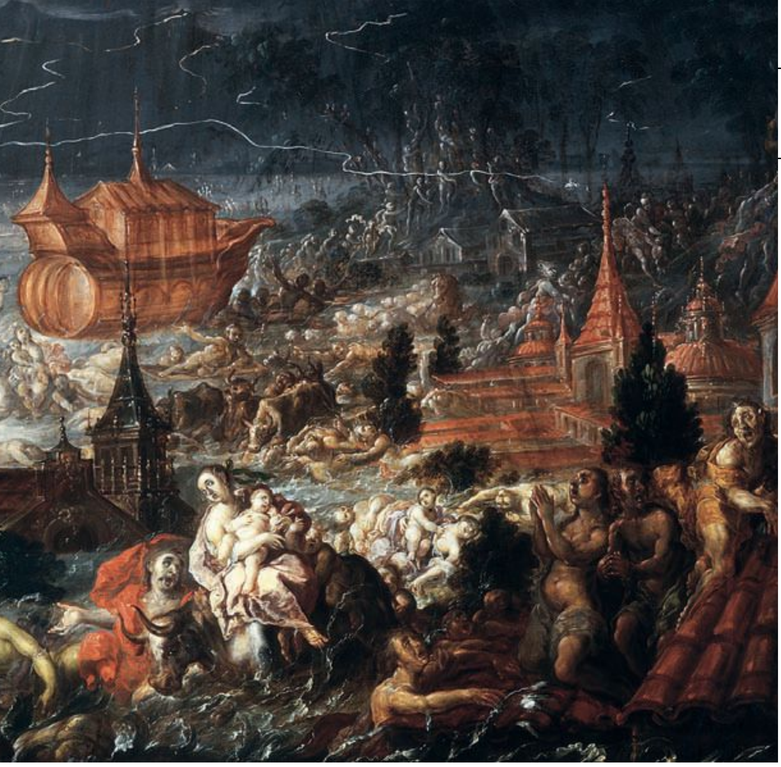
ACERVO DE LA CATEDRAL DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCIÓN. PUEBLA, MEXICO

NEW YORK, New York

Arts of Korea

Highlights from one of the largest American collections of Korean art are going on view in a new, much expanded gallery in the Brooklyn Museum. Now three times the size of the previous space, the gallery will showcase many artefacts that have not been on public display before. The 80 works, covering 1800 years of art in Korea, include celadon ceramics of the Goryeo dynasty including a fine 12th-century ewer in the shape of a lotus bud, a rare early 19th-century official's wide-brimmed hat for ceremonial occasions (which was later banned because of its extravagant scale), and a 19th-century *hwalot*, a heavily embroidered bridal cloak, which after extensive conservation work is on display for the first time since it was acquired in 1927.

Brooklyn Museum
+1 718 638 5000
(www.brooklynmuseum.org)
From 15 September 2017.



Soulful Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt
Examining the mummification of animals offers a chance to understand their role in both the natural and supernatural worlds of ancient Egypt. Cats, dogs, birds and snakes are among the animal mummies, from at least 31 different cemeteries, that are displayed in this exhibition, along with artefacts that explore their ritual use from 3000 BC to the end of the 2nd century AD. Among the highlights is the elaborate and expensive ibis mummy from the early Roman period, wrapped in dyed linen strips to form a herringbone pattern. CT scans reveal new insights into the mummies' contents, and show how some priests misled worshippers.
Brooklyn Museum
+1 718 638 5000
(www.brooklynmuseum.org)
From 29 September 2017 to
21 January 2018.

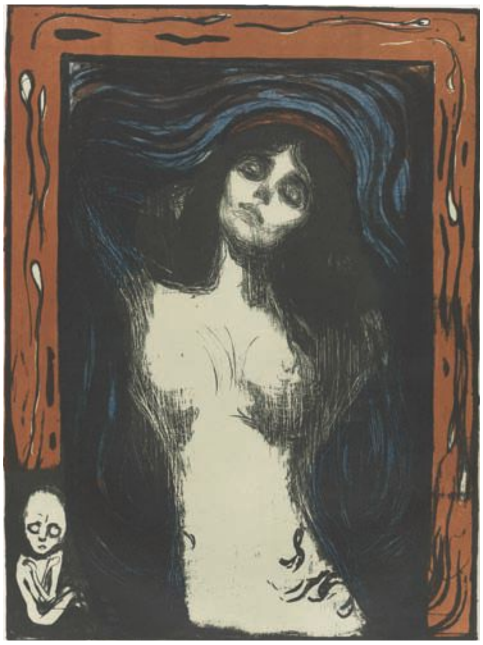
Modigliani Unmasked
Early drawings by Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920) collected by his friend and first patron Paul Alexandre are on display (many for the first time in the US) in this exploration of how the artist's heritage as an Italian Sephardic Jew has influenced his work. Modigliani arrived in Paris in 1906 at a time when anti-Semitism was rife in the city. His drawings, paintings and sculptures respond to the social issues of the era, multiculturalism, and thoughts on identity.
The Jewish Museum
+1 212 423 3200
(thejewishmuseum.org)
From 15 September 2017 to
4 February 2018.

Cristóbal de Villalpando: Mexican Painter of the Baroque
A monumental, newly conserved canvas by Cristóbal de Villalpando (*circa* 1649–1714), painted for a chapel in Puebla Cathedral in 1683 is on display for the first time outside its usual home. Titled *Moses and the Brazen Serpent and the Transfiguration of Jesus* the canvas is accompanied by 10 other paintings, including *The Deluge*, 1689 (above), many of which have not previously been seen in the US.
Metropolitan Museum of Art
+1 20 27 37 45 15
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 15 October 2017.

ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

WASHINGTON DC

Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt
The special status of cats in ancient Egyptian society, religion and politics is explored from the Middle Kingdom to the Byzantine period. On show are feline coffins and statues and amulets oof the cat-headed goddess Bastet,.
Freer/Sackler, Smithsonian Institution
+1 202 633 1000
(asia.si.edu)
From 14 October 2017
to 15 January 2018.



NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, GIFT OF THE EPSTEIN FAMILY COLLECTION

Re-sound: Bells of Ancient China
A variety of ancient bells, spanning the entirety of the Chinese Bronze Age (*circa* 1800 BC–AD 9) and ranging in height from one inch to nearly three feet, chart the development of bell design and related musical practices, reflect the distinct musical cultures that flourished in north and south China. Among the first bronze objects made in China, the bells include examples made for animals (especially dog collars) and chariots (*ling*), signalling bells used in warfare (*zheng*) and bells buried with the dead. Large bells with clappers (*bo*) (below left), originated in the Yangzi River valley and were often decorated with birds, tigers and other creatures.
Freer/Sackler, Smithsonian Institution
+1 202 633 1000
(asia.si.edu)
From 14 October 2017.

Edvard Munch: Colour in Context
From an early age the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944) was in contact with spiritualist ideas popular in the late 19th century. He believed he could see energies emanating from certain hues. This exhibition brings together 21 of his prints, including *Madonna*, 1895 (above right), showing how his choice, combination and meaning of colour were informed by spiritualist principles and psychological theories. Most of the works on display are from the Epstein Family Collection, the most significant collection of Munch's works outside Norway.
National Gallery of Art
+1 20 27 37 42 157 15
(www.nga.gov)
From 3 September 2017 to
28 January 2018.

BRAZIL

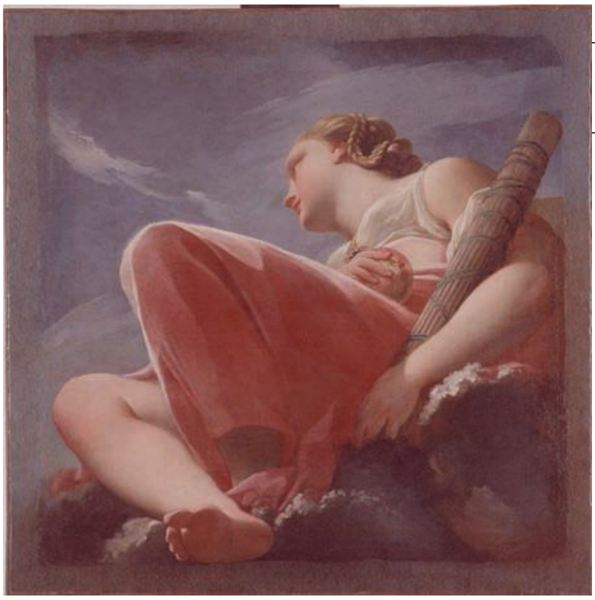
SÃO PAULO

Tolouse-Lautrec in Red
At the end of the 19th century, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901) spent his time capturing the vibrancy of life in Paris on canvas. The São Paulo museum has the best European art collection in South America and this show brings together paintings with five different themes. The three central works showing scenes of prostitutes inside *maisons closes* (brothels) are presented in a red panel, evoking the famous entrance hall of the Maison La Fleur Blanche where the painter was a frequent visitor. Women from many other walks of life are portrayed (washerwomen, models, the bourgeoisie and nobility), as well as men (whose names we know – unlike most of their female counterparts), alongside bars, restaurants, concert-halls and cabarets in the recently electrified French capital.
Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand
+55 11 3149 5959
(www.masp.art.br)
Until 1 October 2017.

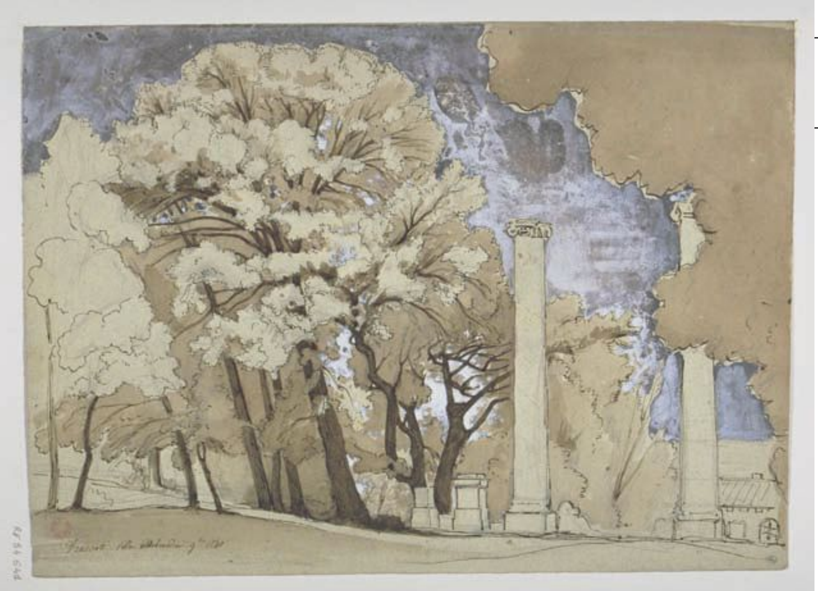
CROATIA

ZAGREB

Baroque Splendour of Venice: Tiepolo and Contemporaries
Masterpieces of the Venetian Baroque from the extensive collection of the Pinacoteca Civica di Vicenza offer a rich tour of 18th-century Italian culture. Taking centre stage is Tiepolo, whose successful career saw him undertake grand commissions across Venice and beyond. His contemporaries, Giambattista Piazzetta, Marco and Sebastiano Ricci, Giambattista Pittoni, Francesco Aviani and Giuseppe Zais are among the other artists featured. There is also work



MUSEI CIVICI, PINACOTECA DI PALAZZO CHIERICATI



© MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

by less well-known artists, such as Louis Dorigny (1654–1742) whose *La Concordia* is shown above.

Museum of Arts and Crafts
+ 385 1 4882 111
(muoen.wordpress.com)
Until 1 October 2017.

DENMARK

COPENHAGEN

Pharaoh: The Face of Power

During the Middle Kingdom (*circa* 2000–1800 BC), the pharaoh unified the country and strengthened his position after a period of decline. Portraits were used to transmit the idea of power. Some sculptures show pharaohs (such as Amenemhet III and his predecessor Sesostris III) looking stern and authoritative, while others, like *The Black Head of a King* (also Amenemhet III) capture a sense of the ruler's powerful personality. Jewellery and amulets are also on view.

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek
+ 45 33 41 81 41
(www.glyptoteket.dk)
From 12 October 2017 to
25 February 2018.

FRANCE

LENS

Italian Paintings from Northern France: Dialogues and Connections

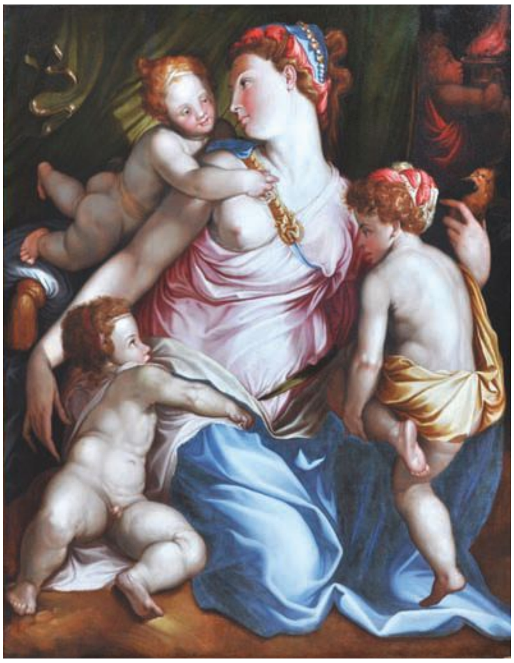
This exhibition features some 20 Italian paintings that are held in collections in Picardy and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais exploring connecting links between 16th- to 18th-century artists. Among the highlights is a charming, 16th-century oil on panel showing *Charity* (below left) from the workshop of Francesco Salviati (1510–63). The exhibition in the Lens Glass Pavilion comes at the end of the *Heures italiennes* series that has been held throughout 2017 in the Hauts-de-France region.

Musée du Louvre-Lens
+33 (0) 32 11 86 321
(www.louvrelens.fr)
From 18 October 2017 to
28 May 2018.

Music! Echoes of Antiquity

Artefacts from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome offer an insight into the role music played in their social, political and religious structures. Cylinder seals, vases, papyri and reliefs reflect the functions of music: as a marker of various stages in the life cycle, as part of religious rituals, as intermediary between gods and men, and as an accompaniment to battles and feasts. A painted wood stela, 1069–664 BC (above right) shows the blind harpist Djedkhonsuiuefank playing before the god Ra-Horakhty.

Musée du Louvre-Lens
+33 (0) 32 11 86 321
(www.louvrelens.fr)
From 13 September
2017 to 15 January
2018.



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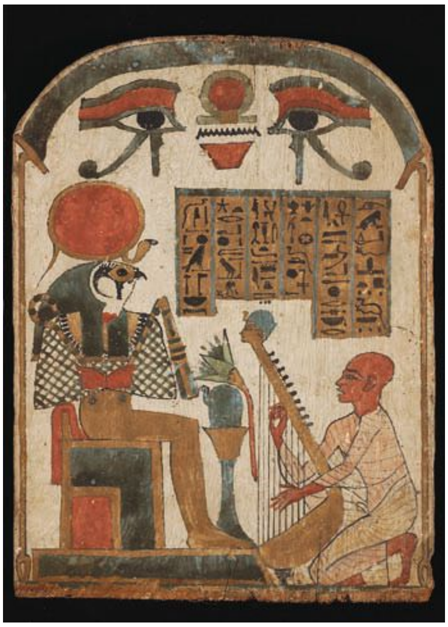

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NICE

Nice in the School of History

The archaeology of Nice and its environs stretches back into prehistory. This exhibition brings together works of art and artefacts to tell its long history, from its origins as the Greek colony Nikaia to the cosmopolitan tourist destination that it is today as France's fifth city.

Musée Masséna
+33 4 93 91 19 10
(ecolesdenice2017.nice.fr)
Until 15 October 2017.

PARIS

2017: The Year of France-Colombia

To mark France-Colombia 2017, this display of 18th-century art from the Viceroyalty of New Granada celebrates Colombian cultural heritage. A wooden statue of Saint Barbara, influenced by the Seville school and still an influence on local artists, and the ornate monstrance from the church of San Ignacio in Bogotá make up the display.

Louvre
+33 1 40 20 50 50
(www.louvre.fr)
From 20 September 2017 to
15 January 2018.

Drawing in the Open Air: Variations of Drawings from Nature in the First Half of the 19th Century

By the 19th century the ability to draw in the open air became an essential part of an artist's training and was practised by many. A large number of *plein air* works depict a variety of subjects, including the unfinished *View of Frascati* (above) by Achille Bénouville (1815–91) from the Louvre's own Department of Prints and Drawings.

Louvre
+33 1 40 20 50 50
(www.louvre.fr)
From 18 October 2017
to 29 January 2018.

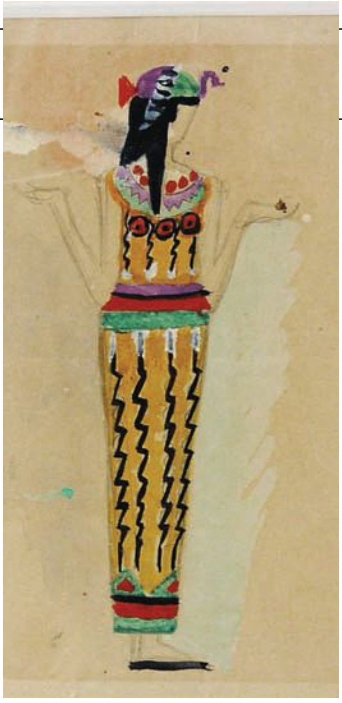
POLAND

KRAKOW

Adriatic Epopee: Ivan Meštrović

The work of Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962) spread across Europe and into the United States, where he was the first living artist to be the subject

MEŠTROVIĆGALLERY, SPLIT. PHOTO: FILIP BEUSAN



© PRACUSA 2017633

of a retrospective at the Met. His sculptures, such as *Contemplation*, 1924 (below left), his drawings, lithographs and architectural plans explore themes, such as symbolism, religious inspiration, south Slavic mythology, motherhood, the female nude and public monuments.
International Cultural Centre
+48 12 424 28 11
(mck.krakow.pl)
Until 5 November 2017.

SPAIN

MADRID

Sonia Delaunay: Art, Design and Fashion

As well as being an avant-garde painter, Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979) was also a prolific designer who strove to apply her ideas to everyday life. Focusing on her creative relationship with her husband Robert Delaunay and her work in Madrid after they moved there 100 years ago, this exhibition highlights the multi-disciplinary nature of her work. It shows her paintings, and also her designs for books advertisements, fashion, textiles, interiors, theatrical sets and stylish costume designs, such as one (above) for the ballet *Cleopatra* in 1918.
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza
+34 917 91 13 70
(www.museothyssen.org)
Until 15 October 2017.

SWITZERLAND

MARTIGNY

Cézanne: The Song of the Earth

Paintings, watercolours and drawings from every stage of Cézanne's career demonstrate how he devoted himself to a few well-chosen themes. Landscapes, still lifes, portraits and depictions of women bathers are among his favourite subjects.
Fondation Pierre Gianadda
+41 27 722 39 78
(www.gianadda.ch)
Until 19 November 2017.

UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON

Frieze Sculpture 2017

London's largest outdoor exhibition, *Frieze*'s summer show in Regent's Park features 23 sculptures by 20th-century and contemporary artists from across the globe. Among those whose work is represented are: Eduardo Paolozzi, Rasheed Araeen, Gary Hume, Alicja Kwade, Hank Willis Thomas, Thomas J Price and Jaume Plensa.
Regent's Park
+44 (0)20 3372 6111
(frieze.com)
Until 8 October 2017.

Tribal Art London

This annual fair is dedicated to tribal art of all kinds, and features a diverse mix of works, including textiles, sculptures, ceramics, jewellery, books and ethnographic photographs from remote regions of Oceania, Africa and Asia. Among the exhibits is a *mukudj* mask (right) which is used in dances to mark important occasions in Punu communities in southern Gabon. There will be daily lectures on tribal art both for novices and experienced collectors and also on the history of tribal tattoos and other forms of now fashionable body art.
Mall Galleries
(tribalartlondon.com)
6–9 September

BRYAN REEVES/TRIBAL GATHERING

MANCETTER, Warwickshire

Plato's Phaedo: The Paths of Life and Death

The Prometheus Trust's three linked weekend seminars offer a chance to become well acquainted with Plato's *Phaedo*, an important philosophical text that examines the human condition, destiny, the nature of virtue and the immortality of the soul.
Purley Chase Centre
(www.prometheustrust.co.uk/html/education.html)
15–17 September; 20–22 October; 1–3 December 2017

OXFORD

Transmission: The Migration of Iconography in Classical Art

This Classical Art Research Centre (CARC) workshop examines the use of certain Graeco-Roman schemes of imagery across different media, places and periods. A range of topics such as copy-books, mythological mosaics, transmission across Roman provinces, and Classical imagery in Late Antique manuscripts will be covered.
CARC, University of Oxford
(www.carc.ox.ac.uk)
28–29 September

CHINA

HONG KONG

Fine Art Asia

This is the 12th year of Fine Art Asia, which brings to Hong Kong a large number of renowned exhibitors from the region and beyond. It covers more than 5000 years of art – from ancient Buddhist and Himalayan bronzes to contemporary photography. The fair attracts around 100 of the top international dealers offering antique silver and timepieces, Impressionist, modern and contemporary art and design. This is Asia's leading fine art fair.
Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre
(www.fineartasia.com)
30 September–3 October

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LONDON: *Londinium* and *Blood Rite*

Devoted to London's Roman history, *Londinium* is a festival featuring a broad programme of events (many of them free) from wine-tastings (on 1 and 29 September) to comedy tours (from 5 to 13 September and 31 September to 1 October). One of the highlights of the festival is a series of talks: Mary Beard will deliver the keynote lecture on images of Roman emperors (26 October). Other speakers include: Simon Elliott (21 September; 2 and 12 October); Gustav Milne (27 September); John Clark (5 October and 8 November) and Roger Tomlin (10 October). Their subjects are diverse: from the 1st-century Roman writing tablets, found at the Bloomberg site, to the rediscovery of Londinium in the 16th century. And on 20–21 October, there is *Blood Rite,* an outdoor show, using dance, music and digital animation to show the impact of Londinium and its amphitheatre on the contemporary city.
Various locations
(visitlondon.com/romans)

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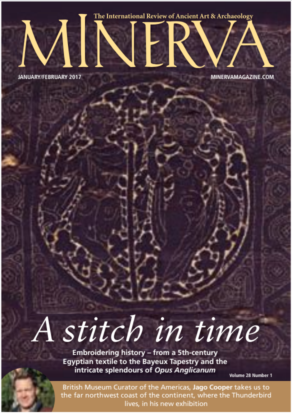

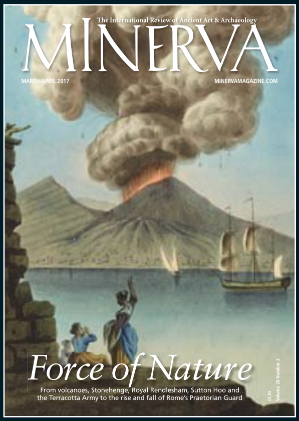

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GYPSUM FRAGMENT OF A SCABBARD TERMINAL (QUILLON)
ASSYRIAN, CIRCA 883–859 B.C.

Height 25 cm.

Provenance: Almost certainly from Room G 25 from the North-west Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud.
Colonel Norman Colville M.C. (1893–1974), Cornwall